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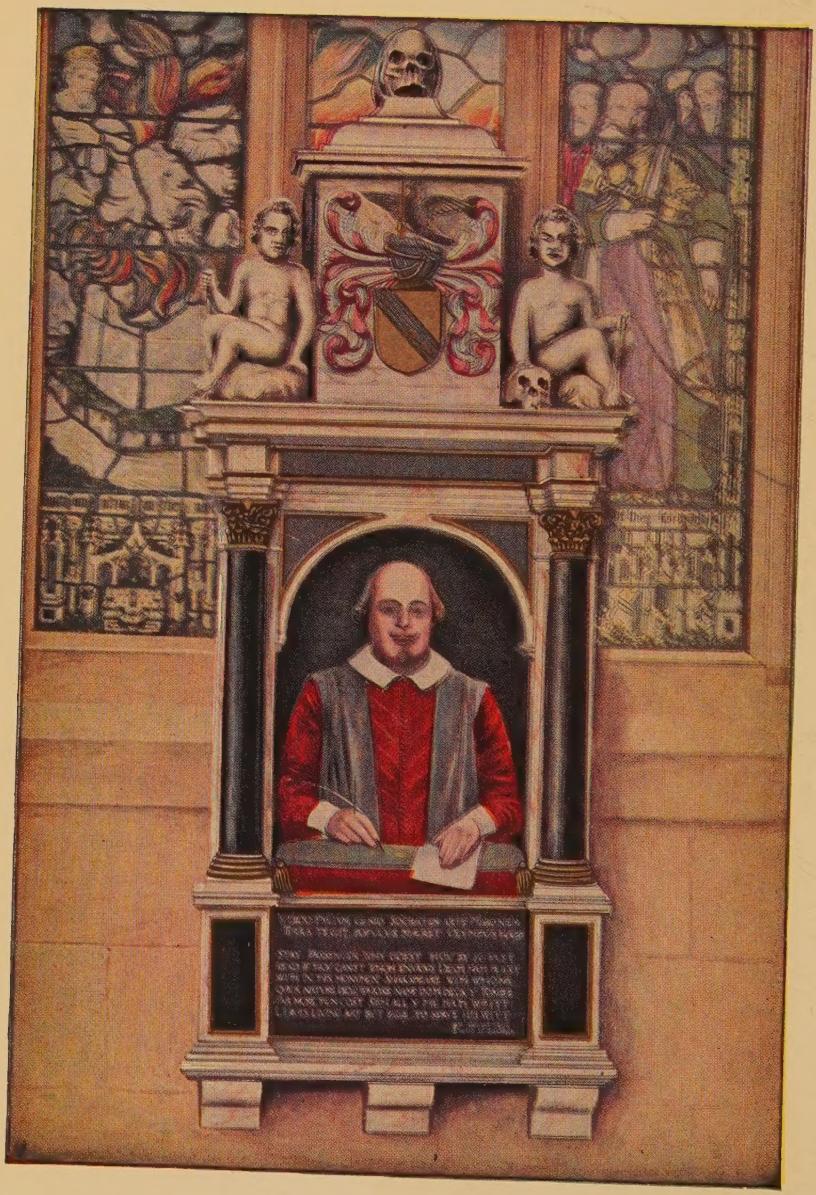

ENGLISH LITERATURE

BY

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L. H. J.

TO

MY WIFE

WHOSE SYMPATHY

AND

INTELLIGENT INTEREST

HAVE PROVED INVALUABLE

IN THE

PREPARATION OF THIS

WORK

PREFACE

The writer of this volume has tried to furnish students and general readers with a clear and concise account of English literature and its makers from the beginnings to the present day. The influences of social and other movements on literary development have been brought out in the brief introductions to the chapters. The biographies set forth the important facts of the authors' careers without extensive comment. This is in accord with the present writer's conviction that much ready-made interpretation of conditions and motives, after the setting of an author's work and his characteristics have been made clear, is a hindrance rather than a help to students. Since literature is in a peculiar sense an expression of personality, an attempt has been made to sum up the personal traits of each prominent author in a paragraph or two. Wherever an author's contribution has proved epoch-making in literary history, that fact is given special prominence in a final summary.

Throughout the book the writer has earnestly endeavored to keep the balance between external influences—movements, tendencies, environments in general—and the individual, recognizing that the history of English literature is not simply a series of biographies on the one hand, nor a chain of "movements" on the other. As usual, the truth is doubtless to be found in the golden mean, but, in the writer's opinion, with distinct leanings toward the biographies.

This work is designed to accompany a volume of selections from English poetry and prose, several of which are now easily accessible (see list of books following Introduction), or to be used with separate editions of representative classics from *Beowulf* to Kipling. In the earlier periods more illustrative extracts have been inserted, on the asssumption that the literature of these

periods is not usually within reach of the average reader. Wherever, indeed, quotations seemed necessary to clearness, they have been freely introduced. Following each chapter is an outline-summary of the period, with leading characteristics, and a list of useful books, such as are likely to be available for high school and college students.

This volume is in form and content the outcome of years of experience in teaching English literature. Whatever its defects, it at least has the merit of having been written with a definite set of individuals in view. In a time of many and excellent histories of English literature it is impossible, of course, for the latest comer into the field to lay claim to any marked originality. All the standard histories have been consulted, and the writer of this work acknowledges his indebtedness. He has, however, throughout this long literary journey steadfastly gone to the literature itself for knowledge and inspiration. To his colleagues, Professors R. A. Stewart and H. A. VanLandingham, who have read the work in proof, the author's thanks are due for helpful suggestions.

Since this work was first issued, a few writers not included have become so well known and widely read that a supplementary chapter has seemed desirable. This chapter has accordingly been prepared for the new edition and will be found to contain a brief review of recent tendencies in English literature and a short account of such authors as give promise of lasting fame. No attempt has been made to present an exhaustive list.

University of Virginia. J. C. M.

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INTRODUCTION

What is Literature?—Any piece of writing, long or short, that gives permanent pleasure to men and women because of its artistic form and expression, is literature. Books which simply impart information are scientific rather than literary; books which appeal to our sense of beauty and to our imagination, or which stir our feelings, belong to literature proper. Literature is closely akin to what are called the fine arts—painting, sculpture, and architecture. Poetry, in particular, because it uses the language of emotion and imagination, is a fine art; and whenever prose is touched with these qualities, it too becomes a fine art. Literature is an expression of the beautiful in pleasing speech. Science is concerned with technical ideas and is therefore more coldly intellectual; literature humanizes knowledge with sentiment and imagination.

English literature is the thought of the English people put into artistic form. It consists of poetry and such prose forms as the novel, the essay, oratory, biography, and history written in attractive style. Style is the flavor of personality. "Literature is the personal use of language," says Newman. The history of English literature attempts to record the lives and works of standard authors together with the historical and social influences that helped to determine the direction of their thought. Literature is in part at least an expression of the social forces of the time in which it was written, but it is in a deeper sense the reflection of interesting personalities.

Literature and History.—History has much to say of the deeds of men—how they founded states, made laws, built cities, went on voyages of discovery, waged wars, acquired territory, and waxed rich through commerce. These are outward actions; and yet, in a deeper sense, they are the results of such abiding emotions and ideals as ambition, love, hate, faith, duty, freedom.

The man of action first had his dream and his vision, then the struggle, then the achievement. With these inward things of the spirit literature is concerned—the motives and passions which, in spite of changing thought and action, remain essentially the same in human nature, making the whole world kin. Scientific books become antiquated and history must be rewritten as knowledge widens, but a great poem is never out of date. Literature reproduces for posterity the spirit of a bygone age more vitally than history does: in the dramas and lyrics of the Elizabethan age still throbs the joyous life of those spacious days; in the novel the future historian will feel the currents of our times.

For the larger background of literature we must go to history. Every epoch-making political, religious, or social movement in a nation is reflected in its literature. The institution of Feudalism, for instance, colored poetry and prose throughout the Middle Ages; the Renaissance and the Reformation stimulated literary production for generations. Our earlier literature bears the stamp of the aristocratic society from which it sprang: kings and princes and nobles fill the books. With the rise of the middle class in Chaucer's time democracy entered literature and through the centuries since has won its way. And so, from age to age, the poet, the dramatist, the novelist, have gone on weaving their silken tapestry, which we call literature, out of the political, religious, and social ideals of the people. Some knowledge of English history is therefore essential to an understanding of the forces which have contributed to the making of English literature.

The Study of Literature.—We must not make the mistake of assuming, however, that a knowledge of history and biography means a knowledge of literature. Information about a period or writer is valuable in so far as it throws light on conditions and motives of literary activity, but studying *about* literature is not studying literature. History and biography, however interesting, should be kept subordinate. "The play's the thing," as Hamlet says; the poem's the thing. Better one poem or play or essay mastered and enjoyed than a whole volume of criticism and gossip. Great literature should be approached with an open mind

and a reverent spirit. Bacon's advice still holds good: "Read not to contradict and confute, nor to believe and take for granted, but to weigh and consider," and one may add, to enjoy. The serious study of literary masterpieces will result in the enrichment of one's mental and spiritual life, and in the forming of imperishable friendships among the loftiest thinkers and seers of our race.

A history of English literature is simply a guidebook to this long picture gallery of immortals. It points out the masters and their works, tells something about them, tries to make them real and human to the seeker after truth and beauty, encourages him to read them for himself. It does not assume to be a substitute for even the least of the works it recommends; its place is secondary. Such a guidebook finds its highest usefulness not so much in giving information as in stimulating and suggesting. Its chief glory

> "Rather consists in opening out a way
> Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
> Than in affording entry for a light
> Supposed to be without."

SOME USEFUL BOOKS OF A GENERAL NATURE

Historical—Green's Short History of the English People, one vol., or Green's History of the English People, four vols. (American Book Co.); Gardiner's Students' History of England (Putnam); Traill's Social England (Putnam); Cheyney's Short History of England (Ginn).

Literary.—Garnett and Gosse's Illustrated History of English Literature, 4 vols. (specially valuable for pictures and facsimiles); Cambridge History of English Literature, 14 vols.; Jusserand's Literary History of the English People, 2 vols.; Ten Brink's Early English Literature, 3 vols.; Morley's English Writers, 11 vols. (through Elizabethan period). In Biography the English Men of Letters Series (Macmillan), Great Writers Series (Scribners), and Beacon Biographies (Merrill), are standard. Hinchman and Gummere's Lives of Great English Writers (Houghton) is an interesting volume of thirty-eight biographies.

Selections Covering the Field of English Literature.—Newcomer and Andrews' Twelve Centuries of English Poetry and Prose (Scott, Foresman & Co.), Manly's English Poetry and Manly's English Prose (Ginn), Century Readings in English Literature (Century Co.), Pancoast's Standard English Poems and Standard English Prose (Holt). These are single-volume collections designed to accompany a History of English Literature.

Gayley's Classic Myths in English Literature (Ginn) and Winchester's Principles of Literary Criticism (Macmillan) are good companions in the reading and study of literature.

For a popular account of the growth of the English language and changes in the meanings of words, Krapp's Modern English (Scribners) and Greenough & Kittredge's Words and their Ways in English Speech (Ginn) are valuable. On the forms and scansion of verse, Alden's Introduction to Poetry (Holt) and Johnson's Forms of English Poetry (American Book Co.) are recommended.

ENGLISH LITERATURE

CHAPTER ONE

ANGLO-SAXON OR OLD ENGLISH PERIOD

450-1066

THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

The Angles and Saxons.—The beginnings of what we now call English Literature properly belong to the continent of Europe rather than to the island home of the English people. The earliest poetry tells of the adventures, the sea wanderings, the warlike deeds, the religious impulses, of men who belonged to Teutonic tribes dwelling along the rugged coasts of northwestern Europe from the Scandinavian and Danish peninsulas to the Rhine and Elbe rivers. Three of these kindred tribes came in large numbers to the coasts of Britain in the fifth and sixth centuries of our era, and by the beginning of the seventh century had spread over much of what we know as England. They were the Jutes, the Angles, and the Saxons, half-barbarian it is true, but possessed of energy and political capacity. Of the three the Jutes seem to have been the least aggressive, for they contented themselves with occupying the southeastern corner of the island, while the Saxons and the Angles pushed on northward and westward until they were masters of the territory stretching far beyond the River Thames. The Angles were more numerous than the other tribes and more capable besides, for from them the country derives its name of Angle-land, afterwards modified to England; from them and their kinsmen the older language is often called Anglo-Saxon; and among them developed the first literary culture.

The Britons and the Romans.—The land to which these fierce strangers came had already been the scene of severe conflicts between the Britons, the original inhabitants, and the Romans, the great colonizers of ancient times. The native Britons were a Celtic people, of the same race as the earlier inhabitants of France and Spain. By the first century before Christ these Britons had spread over what we call England, Scotland, Ireland, and the adjacent islands. Organized in tribes or clans, they had developed a rude sort of civilization which was known to the Romans of Caesar's time who made trading expeditions to Britain; but because of their geographical isolation, they remained comparatively unmolested until Julius Caesar visited them in 55 B. C. This visit of the imperial Roman was the beginning of trouble for the Britons, though it was nearly a hundred years later before they yielded to the world-conquerors under the Emperor Claudius and his legions. After this conquest, Britain, except in the far north and west, was rapidly transformed into a Roman colony with splendid villas, temples, theaters, public baths, great walls and highways. The Roman occupation lasted until the early part of the fifth century, when the legions were recalled to defend Rome against the incursions of the barbarian hordes from the north. Weakened by several centuries of foreign luxury, the Romanized Britons were now harassed by their fiercer kinsmen, the northern and western Celts, who rushed in when the Roman garrisons were withdrawn. In the midst of these domestic troubles came the Saxons swarming over the narrow seas to the shores of Britain, a virile folk who meant to stay and possess the land. It was about the middle of the fifth century when this Teutonic migration began, and by the seventh century the three tribes already mentioned had firmly established themselves in Britain. Henceforth the islands were to be fundamentally Anglo-Saxon, or English, in life and thought.

Influence of the Celts on Literature.—The Celt, whom these English had conquered, was impulsive, quick-witted, imaginative, fond of color, given to gayety, eager for news, clever at

repartee, and a lover of beauty for its own sake. Sensitive of soul, he was responsive to the changeful moods of nature and loved to translate them into song and fairy tale, peopling the streams and fields and forests with mysterious beings that flit Ariel-like through the air, or with elfin creatures that dance in the moonlight, or with woodsprites whose "airy tongues syllable men's names." He abounded, too, in sentiment, giving voice to his emotions in tones of lament or of rapturous joy. The utterance of the Celtic bard shows a kind of wild grace and the song of the Celtic warrior a fierce joy in the clash of battle, for on occasion he was a valiant fighter.

The influence of this Celtic spirit upon our literature has been considerable, though it is too subtle and elusive to be measured with exactness. The inward grace and nimbleness, the airiness and lightness, of some of our most exquisite poetry from Chaucer through Spenser and Milton and Gray on to Poe and Tennyson, can be explained only by taking into account the union of the sensitiveness and gayety of the Celt with the solidity and high seriousness of the Anglo-Saxon. This blending of the two temperaments was, to be sure, the result of centuries of racial absorption through intimate association and intermarriage, in the course of which the Norman-French element powerfully reinforced the Celtic contribution. But there is little or no trace in our earlier literature of the immediate influence of the conquered race. Out of the mist of these confused times, however, has emerged one leader, at least, whose doughty exploits have been the inspiration of many a poem and story, the chivalrous King Arthur with his goodly fellowship of knights. Loaded with legends this heroic Briton has come down the centuries of English poetry as perhaps the most impressive figure in the romance of our race. Around some brave chieftain among the Celts stories of prodigious valor early began to gather, out of which there gradually developed the great Arthurian cycle perfected by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King*.

Geographical Position of England.—Both the geographical position and climate of Britain were favorable to the development

of the new race which was to be permanently at home there. Separated from his kinsmen on the continent of Europe, the Anglo-Saxon had a chance to develop in comparative quiet and under milder skies his nation-making instincts. This isolation meant, above all, the growth of a sturdy spirit of independence which, as we shall see later on, was to blossom into political and religious liberty. He could conserve his strength here in his island home, protected by watery barriers from constant external interference; and these same encircling seas could become highways as well, joining the island to the continent whenever England needed the stimulus of new ideas from abroad. This detachment has from the first helped the English to preserve their individuality, and it has encouraged a certain independence of mind; while at the same time the opportunities for contact with continental movements of various kinds, political, intellectual, artistic, have saved them from a narrow provincialism. Thus it has happened that the sense of nationality among the English people, while deep and vital, has been enlightened and liberal. Of their literature, which is itself a refined and artistic expression of national life and hence mightily influenced by these same advantages of situation and climate, we may now take up the story.

ANGLO-SAXON POETRY

1. THE PAGAN POETRY

Subjects of the Oldest Poetry.—The oldest Anglo-Saxon poetry known to us is full of the spirit of war and adventure, reflecting the two ruling passions of the race, fighting and wandering. The unknown writers of these early lays sing of the mysterious gloom of the sea which beat upon their rugged coasts and over which bands of warriors went to seek their enemies, or some bold adventurer, impelled by curiosity, set forth to visit distant lands. A restless folk were these primitive Englishmen of the continent. When the long winter was over, they pushed out in every direction in their dark boats, bent on plundering or discovery or on wreaking vengeance upon their neighbors. They were in a chronic

state of war: tribal feuds kept them in fighting mood and whetted their appetite for blood. When they returned victorious from a conflict, they assembled in the mead-hall and feasted and sang far into the night. They lived in a region of misty moors, dismal fens or marshes, and desolate stretches of seacoast, which their childlike fancy peopled with all sorts of dreadful monsters. Living close to nature, these fierce Teutons knew all her moods, and so we find their songs and their stories colored with this intimate knowledge and love of nature as they saw it all about them in a climate which, during much of the year, was cloudy and chill. They were fond of giving picturesque names to natural objects: the sea was "the whale's path," "the seal's bath," "the swan's road;" the sun was "heaven's candle" shining through the mist; the night was a "shadow-helm" that came down upon the darkening earth; their boats were "foamy-necked floaters very like seabirds." Indeed, this passionate love of the sea, with its resounding challenge to man and its plaintive undertone, runs through English poetry from the nameless authors of the earliest Anglo-Saxon lyrics down to Byron and Tennyson and Matthew Arnold; and often even the joy of conquest over foes has not been greater than the pride of mastery over the sea. War and the sea—these are the two favorite themes of the older Anglo-Saxon poems, through which there runs a certain grim religious seriousness reflecting the somber cast of the Teutonic mind.

Primitive Religion of the Anglo-Saxons.—The gods of the Anglo-Saxons, before they came to Britain, were as fierce and blood-loving as the men of whom they were the giant images. They had all the passions of these warriors and sea rovers as well as their sense of the mystery of nature. Only the brave, especially those who died fighting enemies, could enter Valhalla, hall of heroes, after death. Above the battlefield rode the Valkyries, victory-women, on their cloud-like steeds to carry dying warriors to Woden's hall. Woden was the chief of the gods; Tiu was the god of war; Thor the god of thunder; and Frea the goddess of fruitfulness. After these Teutonic deities four days of the week are named; while from Eostre, goddess of the dawn or of spring,

comes our word Easter. More dread than any of these, however, was Wyrd, or Fate, who controlled all mortal things. "Wyrd goeth ever as she is bound," says Beowulf. An element of fatalism gives a somber tinge to all this older Anglo-Saxon poetry, that feeling of human helplessness in the hands of some inexorable power, which has been the mood of all great tragedy. But this pagan poetry, which had its beginnings on the continent, fell later into Christian hands and has come down to us considerably modified in religious coloring, though enough of the primitive spirit remains to enable us to form a good notion of the life and ideals of these distant ancestors of ours.

Leading Traits of the Early English.—In spite of their delight in bloodshed and robbery, these early Englishmen had such redeeming traits as seriousness, steadiness, generosity, a high sense of honor, and a feeling for law and personal freedom. Above all, they had that splendid vitality, that primitive freshness and vigor, which, as we shall see, is so necessary in the making of a great nation—the sound physical basis of statecraft and of artistic expression as well. Along with the faults of youth they had the potential virtues of well-rounded manhood. They were sensitive alike to praise or blame; they were seekers after glory rather than fighters for material wealth or mere power; they showed in their mightiest deeds of physical prowess a certain rude nobility which suggests the knightly courtesy of the days of chivalry. When Beowulf lay dead, after sacrificing his life in the fight with the dragon to save his people, his companions can think of no higher tribute than this:

> Of men he was mildest and most beloved,
> To his kin the kindest, keenest for praise.[1]

That he might live to later times through the praiseworthiness of his deeds was the one ardent desire of this heroic leader of his people.

A Group of Shorter Poems.—Among the lyric poems which

1 From Gummere's Version.

afford us glimpses of the Anglo-Saxon and his kindred before the permanent settlement of Britain, are several interesting fragments telling of heroes, wanderings, and sea-sorrow. The oldest of these is *Widsith*, or the *Far-Traveler*, in which a wandering minstrel sings of his journeys through strange lands as well as to the courts of well-known princes. He was often entertained in royal hall and rewarded with golden treasure for his songs and skilful playing on the harp. He sang of deeds of prowess before kings and was ever a welcome guest:

> Widsith spake, his word-hoard unlocked,
> Who farthest had fared among folk of earth
> Through tribes of men, oft taking in hall
> Rich meed of gold.

These are the first lines of the poem, and with the unlocking of Widsith's "word-hoard" the long story of English literature begins. Another typical utterance of this early time is "Deor's Complaint," a song of consolation by an old court poet whom a rival singer had supplanted in royal favor. In his day of adversity Deor recalls how various heroes of his own race had suffered ill-treatment at the hands of former friends and patrons, and yet had kept brave hearts until they finally overcame. He too can endure, though it sorely grieves him to lose his lands and his place before the king. The refrain of the little poem, tinged with melancholy though it is, sounds a characteristic note of Anglo-Saxon poetry, courageous endurance:

> Yet he strove on and overcame, nor shall *my* strength be less.

"The Seafarer" is another interesting lyric, in which an old viking recounts his tribulations on a wintry sea far from kinsmen and friends; and yet his incurable seafaring passion makes him love the dangers of the deep more than the quieter joys of the land:

> Yet the thoughts of my heart now are throbbing
> To test the high streams, the salt waves in tumultuous play.
> Desire in my heart ever urges my spirit to wander
> To seek out the home of the stranger in lands afar off.[1]

1 Iddings' Translation.

This same passion for the sea throbs in Tennyson's "Ulysses"; old and new English poetry come together in such lines as these:

> Push off, and sitting well in order smite
> The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds
> To sail beyond the sunset and the baths
> Of all the western stars, until I die.

Closely akin to "The Seafarer," but gloomier by far, is "The Wanderer," which is the lament of an exiled minstrel out on the sea for the good cheer of home. He has fallen asleep in his boat from sheer weariness and has dreamed of the bright mead-hall where he was rewarded with gifts from his lord and with applause from his fellows. He suddenly awakes to find the snow and hail falling about him and the sea birds dipping to the waves. His sorrow is renewed at the memory of those happy times, and he shapes a song on the vanity of human hopes and the transitory nature of earth's joy and loveliness. To him it seems that everything is in the hands of Wyrd, the goddess of Fate, who destroys cities and brings princes to naught. These four short poems are personal lyrics. If we would get a wider knowledge of the primitive Anglo-Saxon, we must turn to the great national epic poem *Beowulf*.

Beowulf: the Story.—This long poem of over three thousand lines is mainly about the heroic deeds of Beowulf, prince and warrior among the Geats, a people who dwelt in the southern part of Sweden. The story is as follows:

King Hrothgar, whose realm was in the north of Denmark, had built a great pleasure-hall near the sea and named it Heorot, or in modern English Hart, because its gold-adorned gables were decorated with the antlers of a deer or hart. In this hall the king and his thanes or knights feasted and here his band of knights would often sleep. A horrible monster called Grendel, whose lair was deep down under the sea, hearing the sound of revelry in this mead-hall, came one night across the misty moors, broke into the hall and carried off thirty warriors. For twelve years the demon Grendel had paid his deadly visits, until the king's company of thanes was sadly reduced, the land neglected, and the old king dispirited. Across the narrow seas Beowulf, nephew of King Hygelac, heard of Hrothgar's distress

and resolved to go to his relief. With fourteen brave companions he crossed to Denmark. At the banquet in his honor Beowulf after relating to the king, queen, and knights his own deeds of prowess, concluded with these words: "I am resolved to do an earl's brave deed, or end my life in this mead-hall."

That night Beowulf and his men occupied the hall, reclining on the benches. After a while came Grendel bursting through the doorway:

> Straightway he seized a sleeping warrior
> For the first, and tore him fiercely asunder,
> The bone-frame bit, drank blood in streams,
> Swallowed him piece-meal: swiftly thus
> The lifeless corse was clear devoured,
> E'en hands and feet.[1]

Grendel then attacks Beowulf who grapples fiercely with him, the two swaying back and forth through the hall, overturning benches and making a fearful din. Grendel has met his match for once; he tries to get away; but Beowulf pulls off his arm and part of his shoulder, and the monster mortally wounded flees howling to his den beneath the sea. The great arm with its claw-like hand is fastened to the front of the building as a grisly trophy. Beowulf is rewarded with rich gifts by King Hrothgar and his queen. That night, however, Grendel's mother comes from the sea-depths and avenges her son's death by carrying off one of the king's most valiant thanes. Sorrow is renewed in Heorot, and Beowulf therefore resolves to seek out the she-monster.

The next morning accompanied by his men and guided by the king, Beowulf rides to the sea cliffs below which there is a mad whirlpool. It is a gloomy spot, where strange sea-beasts disport themselves at will. Mailclad and armed with his trusty sword Beowulf plunges into the raging pool, and fighting his way through swarms of monsters reaches late in the day the dwelling of the mere-wolf at the very bottom of the sea. He grapples with her and finally throws her to the ground. Rising and attacking him in desperate anger, she pushes him so hard that he stumbles and falls. His own sword is useless, but luckily he sees on the ground a magic sword of some old sea-giant; grasping this he rises and wrathfully smites her neck, "breaking her bone-ring." Beowulf now cuts off the head of Grendel, whose body is lying near, and holding it fast swims up through the bloody waters to greet his waiting and despairing companions. Loud is the joy in Heorot at his victory and safe return. Loaded with gifts Beowulf and his men sail for home.

A long period now intervenes. For fifty years Beowulf has ruled the

[1] These selections are, for the most part, from Gummere's translation: *Old English Epic.*

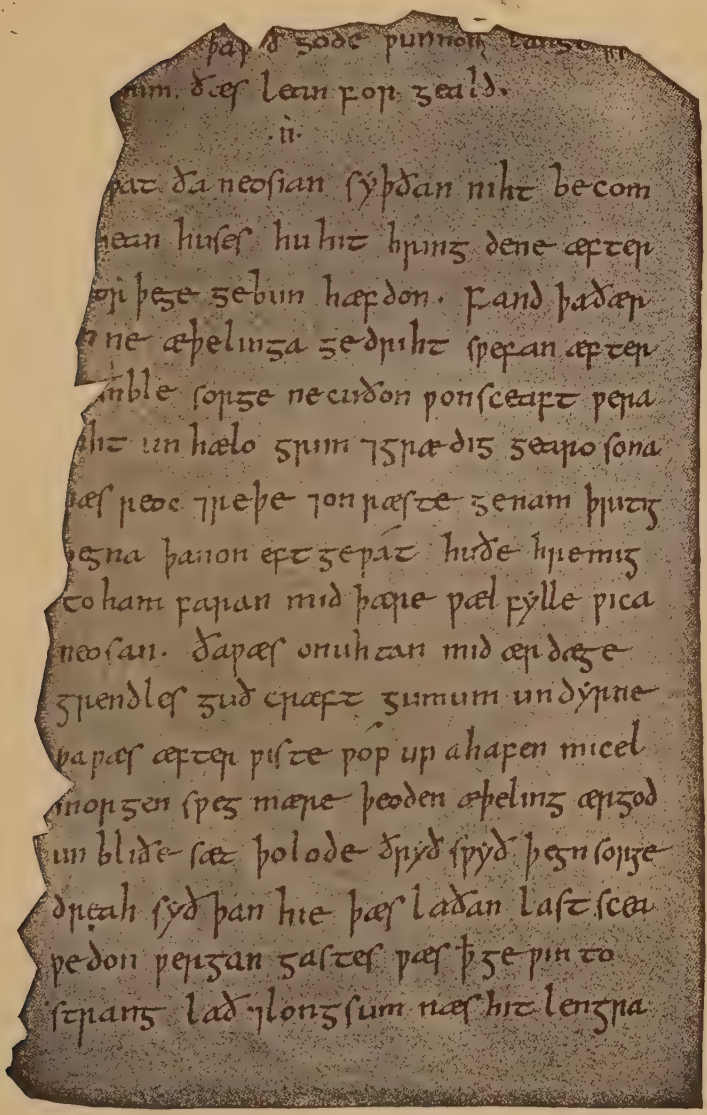
Geats. In his old age a flying, fire-spewing dragon is ravaging the land because its lair has been robbed of golden treasure by a runaway slave. The old king girds himself for battle with the "twilight-flier" in order to save his people. Single-handed he attacks the dragon in its cave, and after a desperate fight slays it, but is himself mortally wounded by the monster's bite. Of his thanes only Wiglaf stays by him in his dire need; the rest forsake him and flee. Wiglaf receives the dying commands of the king along with the gift of a golden collar, helmet, and ring.

A barrow bid ye the battle-famed raise
For my ashes. 'Twill shine by the shore of the flood,
To folk of mine memorial fair
On Hrones Headland high uplifted,
That ocean-wanderers oft may hail
Beowulf's Barrow, as back from far
They drive their keels o'er the darkling wave.

Then his people prepare a mighty funeral-pile on the seacliff and burn his body, as the king had wished.

Then upon the hill
The people of the Weders wrought a mound
High, broad, and to be seen far out at sea.
In ten days they had built and walled it in
As the wise thought most worthy; placed in it
Rings, jewels, other treasures from the hoard.
About the mound
The warriors rode, and raised a mournful song
For their dead king; exalted his brave deeds,
Holding it fit men honour their liege-lord,
Praise him and love him when his soul is fled.

Beowulf: Characteristics.—In this wonderful poem of Beowulf we get glimpses of the old continental life of the English. We hear of tribal feuds, fights with uncanny creatures of the dismal fens and moors, treasure-giving and mead-drinking in hall where the minstrel sings of ancestral heroes; we hear of antique magic swords and runic charms, of extraordinary swimming-matches and deep sea-diving to the mysterious haunts of demons, of encounters with flying fire-dragons in caves filled with gold cups and glittering jewels, and finally of elaborate funeral ceremonies in honor of a mighty chieftain. We have one charming picture of a queenly woman bearing the mead-cup to a distinguished



A PAGE OF THE MANUSCRIPT OF BEOWULF

guest, and later, seated by her royal lord, listening well pleased to that guest's recital of courageous deeds. With the men who figure in this epic story there is a keen love of glory together with an eager thirst for praise. Strength, courage, self-reliance, submission to fate—these are the virtues most lauded in the poem. There is no mention of England, and yet the spirit is unmistakably English. The mood of the men in Beowulf is essentially the mood of Englishmen from Alfred to Cromwell and Wellington. There are few gentler touches in the poem, it is true, to light up the somber atmosphere of myth and legend; but nature was harsh to these first Englishmen, stimulating their superstitious fancy to evoke dread forms out of the gloom. Moreover, being girt round with foes, they had little time to cultivate the graces of life.

As in other national epics there is a mixture of history and legend, so also we find in Beowulf a basis of fact for action and character; but it would be a useless as well as hopeless task to attempt a clear separation of history from myth in a great primitive folk-poem. When the poem was written we do not certainly know. The unknown author probably gathered his material from the folklore legends brought over by the Angles and Saxons in the fifth and sixth centuries. During the seventh and eighth centuries these legends, metrically arranged and sung by gleemen, were in all probability made into a long epic poem by some Northumbrian writer; the existing manuscript of Beowulf, however, now in the British Museum, is in West Saxon and belongs to the tenth century. Though the poem in the form in which it has come down to us shows revision by Christian hands, the atmosphere and setting remain characteristically pagan.

Scop and Gleeman. Poetical Form.—The man who could put into song the deeds of heroes was highly esteemed among Teutonic peoples, and we accordingly find the scop, or maker of verse, prominent in the company of royal thanes. The scop was the stationary court-poet who shaped the raw material of history and legend into patriotic song and story and chanted them at banquets or at other festal gatherings of kings and nobles;

though sometimes, no doubt, he went from court to court reciting his verses. It was the gleeman, however, who was the true wandering minstrel, the strolling harper, the singer of poems made by others, although he occasionally composed his own songs. Anglo-Saxon poetry is well adapted to this rhythmic chanting accompanied by music of the harp. Every line is made up of two short halves with pause between; and each of these halves contains two strongly accented syllables. Instead of end-rhyme, as in modern poetry, there is alliteration, or the use of similar letters or sounds at the beginning of two or more words in each full line. This union of alliteration and accent gave to Anglo-Saxon poetry a rhythm admirably suited for strong musical utterance. Such warlike lays, for example, as the "Fight at Finnsburgh" and the "Battle of Maldon," must have been chanted by gleemen with thrilling effect. A few typical lines from *Beowulf* will illustrate the form of our oldest poetry as just described:

Thaer waes haeletha hleahtor, hlyn swynsode,
Word waeron wynsume. Eode Wealtheow forth,
Cwen Hrothgares, cynna gemyndig,
Grette gold-hroden guman on healle;
Ond tha freolic wif ful gesealde
Aerest Est-Dena ethel-wearde,
Baed hine blithne aet thaere beor-thege.

There was laughter of liegemen; loud it resounded;
Words were winsome. Came Wealtheow forth,
Queen of Hrothgar, of courtesy mindful,
Gold-adorned greeting the guests in hall;
And the high-born lady handed the cup
First to the East-Danes' country-warden,
Bade him be blithe at the beer-drinking.

Two or three readings aloud of these lines will make manifest the alliterative and accentual rhythm of Old English verse and will show, besides, that many of these unfamiliar-looking words are virtually the same as those in use to-day.

2. THE CHRISTIAN POETRY

The Christian Influence.—A change came over the spirit of Anglo-Saxon poetry in the seventh century when Christianity

began to take the place of the primitive religion of the English through the preaching of missionaries and the establishment of schools for the advancement of the new faith. Two streams of Christianity flowed into England, one from Celtic Ireland, which had been converted several centuries before, to Northumbria, and the other direct from Rome to southern and central England through the coming of Augustine to Kent in 597. Thus there were two centers of Christian activity: the influence of Roman Christianity radiated from Canterbury, and of Celtic Christianity from the monasteries of Northumbria and later from the school at York.

The first Christian poetry belongs to Northumbria. Here at the monasteries of Jarrow and Whitby near the windswept shores of the North Sea lived and wrote several men who may be called the fathers of our literature. Later on, when Northumbria lost her political supremacy, the southern kingdom of Wessex became the great literary center of England; but Northumbria was the earliest home of literary culture. In the wake of Christianity came the immense inheritance of Latin learning, arts, and ideals, with their vast imperial background, furnishing new subjects for literature and drawing the isolated Anglo-Saxon genius into the world stream of letters. Thus the Church became the first patron of English literature, the heir and guardian, indeed, of the treasure house of learning for western Europe. During the long years of transition from pagan to Christian ideals, the monk had taken the place of the wandering minstrel, Biblical story and the legends of saints had become the subject matter of song, the uncanny monsters of moor and fen had disappeared, and Wyrd, or Fate, had changed to "divine providence;" though the pagan passion for war and the sea still colored the milder atmosphere of the newer poetry.

"Venerable Bede" (673-735).—At the monastery of Jarrow in Northumbria lived a monk named Baeda, or Bede, who, in his own words, was always "taking delight in learning, teaching, and writing." Bede was the foremost scholar of his time, a prolific writer, and a man of great purity of life and strength of

character. Early in the eighth century he wrote in Latin *The Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, which, in spite of its name, is not simply a church history, but a general account of the inhabitants of England from Julius Caesar's time to his own. Although this book, written in an age of singular credulity, is a curious mixture of fact and legend, it is nevertheless a valuable source of information, for Bede was a painstaking his-

DURHAM CATHEDRAL
The burial-place of "Venerable Bede."

torian. To him we are indebted for an interesting account of the poet Caedmon who lived in the neighboring monastery of Whitby.

Caedmon (died 680).—According to Bede this Caedmon was a servant at the monastery of Streoneshalh, or Whitby, in Northumbria, the ruins of which still stand on the cliffs above the North Sea. The head of this establishment was the Abbess Hilda, a princess of the royal blood. It was customary at the feasts there for each one to take the harp and sing to its accom-

paniment for promotion of the general mirth. But Caedmon was an ignorant man and knew not how to sing or play the harp: and so it happened that when he saw the harp draw near, he would slip out of the banquet hall and for shame steal away to his lodging. One night he had as usual left the entertainment, going this time to the stables to take charge of the cattle for the night. In his sleep there appeared to him a man who saluted him and said: "Caedmon, sing me something." "I cannot sing anything," replied Caedmon, "and for that reason I left the feast and came hither." Again he who spoke to him said: "Nevertheless you will have to sing to me." Then asked Caedmon: "What shall I sing?" He replied: "Sing to me the beginning of all things."

The song which Caedmon sang, as reported by Bede, is probably the first piece of extant English literature composed in England:

> Now must we hymn the Master of Heaven,
> The might of the Maker, the deeds of the Father,
> The thought of his heart. He, Lord everlasting,
> Established of old the source of all wonders:
> Creator all-holy, He hung the bright heaven,
> A roof high upreared, o'er the children of men;
> The King of mankind then created for mortals
> The world in its beauty, the earth spread beneath them,
> The Lord everlasting, omnipotent God.[1]

Caedmon related his dream to Hilda and the learned men of the monastery, and by her order they translated to him various parts of the Bible narrative. After fixing it in his memory, for he was an unlettered man, Caedmon would meditate upon it and later turn it into poetry. He soon became a monk and devoted himself to holy service, dying at an advanced age loved and revered for his pure life and because of the divine gift of song.

Three poems, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, and a part of *Daniel*, known collectively as the *Paraphrase*, have come down to us under Caedmon's name; modern scholars quite generally agree, however,

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[1] Cook's Translation.

that all we certainly have from Caedmon is the hymn quoted by Bede, a version of which has just been given. The *Paraphrase* was discovered in the seventeenth century, and some earlier scholars, on the strength of Bede's assertion that Caedmon turned many parts of the Bible into song, associated Caedmon's name with these three poems as well as with a fragment entitled *Judith* contained in another manuscript. In all these so-called Caedmonian poems are passages of striking beauty and vigor. Whenever a warlike episode or other tragic situation occurs—such, for instance, as the overwhelming of Pharoah's army in the sea—the poet, true to the Teutonic instinct, gives free play to his imagination with the result that his verse glows with the fire of genuine passion. By their sweep and their sublimity many lines in the *Genesis* remind us of Milton, who a thousand years later, composed his great epic *Paradise Lost* on much the same theme. The fragment *Judith* in particular, based on the apocryphal Book of Judith, is full of the clash of arms and the wild glee of triumph over foes. When Judith, a Hebrew maiden who has boldly entered the tents of the Assyrian hosts to save her native town, returns to the walls with the head of King Holofernes just cut off by her, the tumultuous greeting she receives from her townspeople before they rush forth to destroy the enemy, recalls the warlike din and savage joy of the most spirited pagan poetry:

> Helmeted men went from the holy burgh,
> At the first reddening of dawn to fight;
> Loud stormed the din of shields.
> For that rejoiced the lank wolf in the wood,
> And the black raven, slaughter-greedy bird;
> Both knew that men of the land thought to achieve
> A slaughter of the fated ones. Then flew
> The eagle, dewy-feathered, on their track,
> Eager for prey; the sallow-coated bird
> Sang with its horny beak the song of war.[1]

Cynewulf.—Of Cynewulf, who after the unknown author of *Beowulf* was the greatest of Anglo-Saxon poets, we know even

1 Morley's Translation.

less than we do of Caedmon. He lived in Northumbria or Mercia in the latter part of the eighth century and wrote a number of deeply religious poems, to four of which he signed his name in a kind of acrostic formed of runic letters. From certain apparently autobiographic passages in these poems we gather that in early life Cynewulf was a wandering minstrel singing in mead-halls and elsewhere, that later he may have been attached as a thane to some great prince, and that finally he gave up paganism for Christianity and devoted the last years of his life to composing religious verse. The four poems known to be his are *Elene, The Christ, Fates of the Apostles,* and *Juliana.*

Elene (Helena) is the story of the finding of the true cross by Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. Constantine sees in the sky on the eve of a great battle a jeweled cross with the inscription, "By this sign shalt thou conquer." After the battle the victorious Emperor sends his mother Helena to the Holy Land to find the original of the cross of his vision. Miraculously guided she discovers three buried crosses in Jerusalem. By touching a dead body with each in turn she finds the true cross, for when that was touched the dead body was immediately restored to life. The account of the battle between Constantine and the Huns and the description of Helena's sea voyage reflect all the old barbarian passion for war and the sea, which in one form or another runs through the centuries of English poetry. *The Christ* is a metrical account of the Nativity, the Ascension, and Doomsday; while *Juliana* is the story of the sufferings and death of the virgin martyr-saint Juliana.

Among other poems sometimes attributed to Cynewulf the most interesting are the *Dream of the Rood,* or *Cross; Andreas,* a romantic story of the adventures of St. Andrew who goes to rescue St. Matthew from cannibals and sorcerers; *Judith,* already mentioned in connection with Caedmon; a number of *Riddles;* and an exceedingly beautiful poem called *The Phoenix.*

The Phoenix is the one long Anglo-Saxon poem in which the gentler moods of nature find expression. The poem is based on a Latin original, but the rich, luxuriant coloring of the English

version indicates a decided Celtic influence. The story is as follows:

The Phoenix, a bird of gorgeous plumage, dwells far to the East in a fair forest upon the trees of which hang always the most delicious fruits. In this clime of the sun "neither hail nor frost nor windy cloud descends to the earth, nor does water fall smitten by the wind, but wondrous streams spring up as wells, and the winsome waters from the middle of the wood irrigate the soil with their fair flowing." No music was ever heard sweeter than the song of the Phoenix, the attendant of the sun. But after a thousand years the bird, grown old, desires to renew his youth, and so he builds him a funeral pile of odorous twigs and spices in a lonely wood. This pile is kindled by the sun's fierce rays and the bird's body reduced to ashes. From a little ball of ashes creeps a "wondrously beautiful worm" which soon grows into another gay-plumaged bird as resplendent as the first. And so dying and coming to life again the Phoenix goes on forever, a symbol of immortality.

The poem is intended as a Christian allegory of death and resurrection. The tropical gladness of the summer climes of balmy airs and sunlit seas is in strong contrast to the sullen gloom of northern lands and waters in the older Saxon poetry, reminding us of Tennyson's "island valley of Avilion,"

> Deep meadowed, happy, fair with orchard lawns,
> And bowery hollows crowned with summer sea.

ANGLO-SAXON PROSE

The Danish Invasions.—About the close of the eighth century marauding bands of Danes overran Northumbria. These Danes, be it remembered, were kinsmen of the Anglo-Saxons, but far behind them in civilization; for while the Anglo-Saxons had settled down to an agricultural life and had profited by the schools and religious training of Christian scholars, the Danes were essentially the same wild, freebooting folk from whom the English had separated on the continent three hundred years before. And now they had come to harry the land with fire and sword. Northumbria, the center of literary culture, was laid waste, her manuscripts burned or scattered to the winds, her scholars killed or

driven southward, and her churches pillaged or left in ruins. We do not wonder that the burden of the prayers of Englishmen in those troublous times was, "From the fury of the Danes, good Lord deliver us!" The literary and political supremacy of Northumbria was gone. The southern kingdom of Wessex through the energy and genius of Alfred, who finally checked the Danish invasion, became in the second half of the ninth century the political and literary center of England. Such poetic literature as escaped the fury of the Danes was now translated into West Saxon and in that dialect has come down to us; while a new literature, almost entirely of prose, was developed at the court of King Alfred.

STATUE OF ALFRED THE GREAT
At Winchester

Alfred the Great and Prose Literature.—Fortunately for the English race there came to the throne in 871 a man who was fitted both by temperament and training to fight battles, to govern with a strong hand, to build up schools, and to encourage literary activity. From a child he was a lover of books, and even in the most strenuous times of war he did not forget his obligations to promote learning and religion. Early in life he had been to Rome and later he had spent some time at the French court. No doubt what he had seen at these old centers of civilization made him ambitious that his own people should have an interest in the treasures of the past. He accordingly established schools, founded libraries, and brought noted scholars to his court. Recognizing his own lack of knowledge, he studied Latin, then the learned language, with a scholarly Welshman named Asser, who later wrote a life of his royal patron. What little leisure Alfred had from cares of State he devoted to the translation of books from Latin into Anglo-Saxon for the good of his people, who were in a deplor-

able state of ignorance. In his preface to the translation of Pope Gregory's Pastoral Care (*Cura Pastoralis*) in which he addresses the clergy of his kingdom, he says: "So entirely had learning fallen away among the English that there were very few on this side the Humber who knew how to render their prayers in English or so much as translate an epistle from Latin into English. I suppose there were not many beyond the Humber. They were so few that I cannot think of a single one south of the Thames when I took the kingdom."

KING ALFRED'S JEWEL[1]

Alfred cultivated friendly relations with literary and religious centers on the continent, sent out explorers and gathered about him a body of learned men who turned into West Saxon many famous books and themselves composed others. In all these ways he sought to develop a strong national spirit and at the same time to save his country from a deadening provincialism. Because of his unselfish character, his courage, his practical wisdom, and his high patriotism, he was early called "England's Darling;" while his figure looms so large in those semi-barbarous times that by later generations he has been named "Alfred the Great." "He found learning dead, and he restored it; education neglected, and he revived it:" this is the language of an inscription to his memory at Wantage. Higher praise he would not have wished.

Of the translations from Latin into his own tongue by Alfred himself, or under his direction, four are particularly noteworthy: Bede's *Ecclesiastical History of the English People*, of which mention has already been made; Gregory's *Pastoral Care*, a book of instructions for the clergy in the conduct of their daily duties; Orosius' *Universal History and Geography*, written by a Spanish monk of the fifth century and regarded for several centuries as the standard manual of general history; and Boethius' *Consolation*

[1] This interesting relic, which is now in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, was discovered in 1693, near Alfred's retreat at Athelney. It is made of gold and blue enamel, with an effigy of the king as centerpiece. The inscription reads, "Alfred had me made."

of Philosophy, the work of a noble Roman of the sixth century who wrote it to comfort himself in prison. This book King Alfred made into a standard textbook on ethics, adapting it to the moral and religious needs of the time. It was indeed throughout the middle ages a favorite book with philosophers and scholars generally.

But the greatest prose monument of this period is the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, which is not a translation but an original record of the most important events in English history from the middle of the fifth century to the middle of the twelfth. Brief records of the chief historical events of each year had been kept in the monasteries from the earliest times, but they were dry annals with many omissions. Under Alfred's direction these scanty chronicles were revised and enlarged into a connected history. That part in particular of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle which has to do with Alfred's own reign rises into the dignity of real literature. The monotony of the *Chronicle* is occasionally broken by the introduction of verse: for instance, under the year 937 we find the "Battle of Brunanburgh," and under 991 the "Battle of Maldon," two stirring martial poems full of the old-time fire of the race. Indeed, the "Battle of Maldon" has been aptly called the "swan-song of Anglo-Saxon poetry."

Decline of Anglo-Saxon Literature.—The impulse which Alfred gave to religious and educational development lasted long after his time. Winchester, Alfred's capital, became the center of educational and religious activity, and from it radiated an energizing influence to western and central England, but Northumbria was left desolate. No really great literature was produced, however. There were theological works, textbooks, and lives of saints, but there were no inspired singers as in the days of Caedmon and Cynewulf. During the century and a half following Alfred's death (901), the only writings which may be called literature were the *Homilies*, or *Sermons*, of Aelfric, a great preacher who flourished at the end of the tenth and on into the eleventh century. These *Homilies* and the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle* are the best examples of later Anglo-Saxon prose. The truth

is, the tenth century was one of literary decadence; the creative impulse of the earlier days had spent its force; the tide of Roman culture that came with Christianity had ebbed; long political struggles had exhausted the nation and narrowed its vision; new blood was needed. At this critical time came the Normans across the narrow sea bent on conquest.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (450-1066)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Anglo-Saxon Poetry	
Shorter Poems: Far-Traveler, Deor's Complaint, Seafarer, Wanderer	Coming of the Angles and Saxons under Hengist and Horsa, 449
Beowulf (seventh or eighth century)	
Caedmon's Paraphrase of Scripture, 670	Introduction of Christianity under St. Augustine, 597
Cynewulf's Elene, Christ, Juliana (later eighth century)	Egbert, of Wessex, First King of all English Peoples, 827
The Phoenix, Battle of Brunanburgh, Battle of Maldon	Invasions of the Danes, 790-878
II. Anglo-Saxon Prose	
Alfred's Translations: Bede's Ecclesiastical History, Orosius, Boethius, Gregory's Pastoral Care	Reign of Alfred the Great, 871-901
Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (860-1154).	Reigns of Anglo-Danish kings, Cnut and his successors, 1016-1042
Aelfric's Homilies	

Principal Themes of Anglo-Saxon Literature: War, Seafaring, Religion

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Allen's Anglo-Saxon England, Freeman's Old English History, Brooke's Early English Literature, Brooke's English Literature from the Beginnings to the Norman Conquest, Translations of Beowulf by Child (Houghton), Garnett (Ginn), Gummere (Houghton), Hall (Heath), Huyshe (Dutton), Cook and Tinker's Translations from Old English Poetry, Cook and Tinker's Translations from Old English Prose.

CHAPTER TWO

ANGLO-NORMAN PERIOD

1066-1350

The Normans.—The Normans, or Northmen, came to England in 1066 directly from Normandy in the northern part of France, where their ancestors had settled about a century and a half before. Their earlier home was in Scandinavia, Denmark, and the adjacent regions, from which the English themselves had originally come, as well as the troublesome Danes of Alfred's time. The Normans were therefore kinsmen of the Teutonic stock which, after conquering the Celts of Britain, had peopled the island and made its literature. But the Normans had lived in France since the early years of the tenth century and had so thoroughly assimilated the language and customs of their adopted country, that by the middle of the eleventh century they showed few traces of their wild northern origin. Through their intermarriage with a southern folk they had acquired a certain dash and buoyancy, a brilliancy of wit, a sensitiveness to beauty of form, and a love of romance, without losing their native vigor and their adventurous spirit. They now spoke French, they encouraged learning and art, they built churches, they loved music and literature, they cultivated the courtly graces of chivalry, and paid in general more attention to the refinements of life than the English among whom they were soon to live and upon whom they were destined to have so signal an influence. On that October day in 1066 when Duke William's men moved forward to attack Harold's English army at Hastings, the Norman minstrel Taillefer went before the advancing host chanting one of the songs about Roland, Charlemagne's famous knight.

Thus these transformed Northmen entered England with sword and song, significant emblems of political and literary conquest.

Effects of the Norman Conquest.—The coming of the Normans meant radical changes in the political, social, religious, and intellectual life of the English people. The new king of England, whom we know as "William the Conqueror," was the head of two kingdoms, as he was also duke of Normandy: indeed, for a hundred and fifty years after the Conquest the Norman line of English kings ruled over Normandy as well. Into all offices of State William put his own nobles, displacing the Anglo-Saxons, who speedily sank to the level of political servitude. Most of the large estates in England passed into the control of Norman masters who built great frowning castles, in which, with bodies of French retainers, they lived as lords looking down with aristocratic disdain upon the Saxon churls. The English clergy, who for centuries had contributed so much to learning and literature, were turned out of churches, and monasteries and their places filled with French and Italian priests and scholars. For instance, Lanfranc, a well-known writer of Normandy, himself an Italian, was made Archbishop of Canterbury. The little Saxon churches were replaced by splendid minsters which are among the architectural wonders of the world to-day.

Along with these general political, social, and religious changes a new language was introduced as the medium of official and social intercourse, and with it came new ideas into the schools and a new kind of literature from royal court and baronial hall. But the English, though everywhere subordinate, held together in dogged determination to preserve their social unity and their own strong, sinewy speech, though as the years went on both foreign customs and alien tongue were to be gradually but completely assimilated. Still, the tenacity with which the English held on to their native Saxon after it had ceased to be the language of books and culture, meant the ultimate triumph in all essentials of Anglo-Saxon speech and thought; but happily for us, this amber and somewhat rigid vernacular was heightened in color

and made more supple by the infusion of French gayety of spirit and nimbleness of wit.

This general disturbance of the old order was, however, the best thing which could have happened at this critical time in the history of the English people; and among the definite results of the Norman Conquest four are specially noteworthy as contributing to the growth of the nation and its literature:

I. *England was drawn into the current of continental life.* Thus she was saved from the deadening isolation into which she had lapsed after Alfred's time, inasmuch as the movement of the governing class back and forth would tend to strengthen the connection between the island and the continent of Europe.

2. *A stronger national unity followed the centralizing of power under a more systematic government.* This growth in nationality was necessarily slow, however, because of the hostility of the two rival peoples for a long time after the Conquest. The chief weakness of the Anglo-Saxon kingdoms had grown out of their inability to unite. There can be no great literature where there is not a strong sense of nationality. The fusion of Norman and Saxon made England for the first time truly national.

3. *New ideas and new subjects for literature were brought into England by the Normans.* The range of Anglo-Saxon literature, as we have seen, was narrow, and long before the Conquest the native poetry had lost its fire. Now fresh material had come from France where minstrels sang and poets composed endless romances of love and knightly prowess.

4. *The language was enriched by the absorption of French and Latin words.* The cause of learning was also strengthened by the incoming of scholars of European reputation. For about a century and a half following the Conquest two languages were spoken in England, and one language, Norman-French, was used in literature. The only piece of native prose was the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle,* and that came to an end in 1154. All persons in authority spoke French and all official documents in State and Church were in that language. Between those who spoke French and those who spoke only Saxon there was a great social gulf. The

result was the disappearance of English as a literary language for a hundred and fifty years.

During this time, however, there was naturally a considerable intermingling of the new and old populations through intermarriage, and particularly through a developing sense of patriotic unity. Thus it came to pass that the Saxons learned some French, and the Normans were compelled for social and business reasons to know a little English. An event which hastened the fusion of the two peoples and the two languages was the loss of Normandy in 1204 to the kings of England; after that date no English noble might hold an estate in France. Meanwhile, Saxon continued to be the colloquial speech of the great sturdy people who lived close to the soil and did the everyday tasks of the nation; but it was not until 1362 that English might be used officially in law courts and in Parliament. Indeed, no king of England spoke English as his mother tongue for two hundred years after the Conquest. When the old English language did emerge from underground, so to speak, in the early thirteenth century, it was indeed a changed tongue: it had lost many of its inflections, or endings, and it was beginning to borrow French words; it was gaining in grace, flexibility, and range of expression. Transformed through the assimilation of a Romanic element, the language of Alfred, still Anglo-Saxon in genius and structure, was shaping itself for the poetic art of Chaucer and his successors.

The New Literature.—The centers of literary production during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were courts, castles, and religious houses; and the one centralizing institution, introduced by William the Conqueror and developed by his successors, was Feudalism. This was a system of land tenure by great nobles, based on military service for the king who, in theory at least, owned all the land. Out of Feudalism grew the knightly order of Chivalry which cast a glamour over mediaeval literature everywhere in western Europe and helped to satisfy the universal craving for marvels, color, and splendid pageantry. The spirit of chivalry manifested itself in knightly courage, romantic love, and religion—the three chief interests of the Middle Ages—all

reflected in the literature of these confused and picturesque times. It is, accordingly, easy to distinguish two principal lines of literary movement after the coming of the new literature about the opening of the thirteenth century—Romance and Religion.

From the Conquest to the beginning of the thirteenth century, literature in England consisted mostly of histories, or chronicles in Latin, written by scholarly churchmen. Among these numerous chroniclers one in particular deserves emphatic mention, because his book came to be a storehouse of legends for later writers of romance. This was GEOFFREY OF MONMOUTH, who was connected with the church at Monmouth on the Welsh border and was himself of Welsh descent. About 1140 Geoffrey wrote in Latin what he called a *History of the Kings of Britain* (*Historia Regum Britanniae*), tracing the line of sovereigns back to Brutus, a descendant of the Trojan Aeneas. Among these legendary British kings occur the names of Gorboduc, Cymbeline, Lear, and Arthur, all of whom figure in later literature—Gorboduc as the hero of our first English tragedy, Cymbeline and Lear in Shakespeare's great plays, and King Arthur more widely in the world's literature. This work was a clever compilation of classical traditions and Celtic stories which had no doubt long been floating around in oral form, ready for the shaping hand of a skilful narrator. The Arthurian story, by all odds the most valuable contribution made by Geoffrey in his book of wonders, appealed at once to the popular imagination. The nation was hungry for romance and therefore welcomed a work which furnished fresh material for poets at a time when there were signs of reviving literary activity. Wace, a French priest of the island of Jersey, turned Geoffrey's book into verse, and a little later LAYAMON (1205), a parish priest of "a noble church upon the Severn's bank," used Wace's poem as a basis for his metrical account of the kings of Britain.

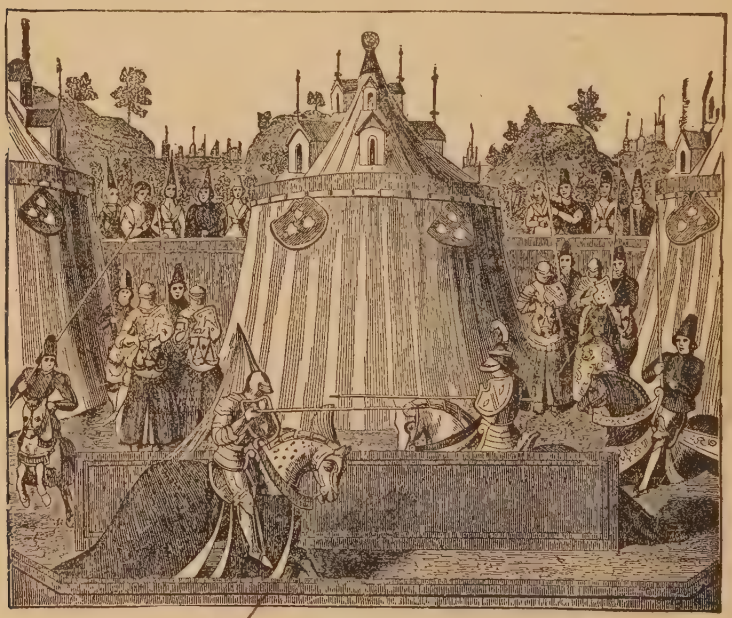
Layamon's Brut.—The production of this poet-priest Layamon is of interest to us chiefly because it contains the first account in English of King Arthur and his Round Table. The poem begins with the destruction of Troy and the flight of Aeneas to

Italy, tells how Brutus, the great grandson of Aeneas, went west and founded the kingdom of Britain, traces the line of British kings, and concludes with a lengthy history of Arthur and his knights. As Layamon introduced into his long poem of thirty-two thousand lines certain legends which are not found in his authorities, Wace, Bede, and others, we infer that he must have utilized local Celtic stories known to him in oral form, such as the tales about the wonderful Enchanter Merlin. We see, therefore, how considerable was the Celtic influence upon the literature of the Anglo-Norman period through the writings of the two romancers, Geoffrey and Layamon, whose homes were on the border of Wales. Layamon's English shows that a few French words are creeping in, that the old endings are falling away, and that under French influence there is less alliteration and more tendency toward end-rhyme. The parting words of King Arthur in Layamon's poem and the account of the mysterious boat and maidens remind us of the familiar lines in Tennyson's *Passing of Arthur*. Layamon's words, with following translation, are these:

And ich wulle varen to Avalun, to vairest alre maidene,
To Argante there quene, alven swithe sceone,
And heo scal mine wunden maken alle isunde,
Al hal me makien mid haleweiye drenchen;
And seothe ich cumen wulle to mine kineriche,
And wunien mid Brutten mid muchelere wunne.
Aefne than worden ther com of se wenden
That wes an sceort bat lithen, sceoven mid uthen,
And twa wimmen therinne wunderliche idihte;
And heo nomen Arthur anan, and a neouste hine vereden,
And softe hine adun leiden, and forth gunnen lithen.
Tha wes hit iwurthen that Merlin seide whilen,
That weore unimete care of Arthures forthfare;
Bruttes ileveth yete that he beo on live,
And wunnie in Avalun mid fairest alre alven;
And lokieth evere Bruttes yete whan Arthur cume lithen.

And I will fare to Avalon, to the fairest of all maidens,
To Argante the very beautiful queen of the elves;
And she shall make my wounds all sound,
And make me whole with healing draughts;

And afterwards will I come to my kingdom,
And dwell 'mong Britons with mickle joy.
Even with these words there came from the sea
A short boat gliding, shoved by the waves,
And two women therein with wondrous attire;
And they took Arthur anon and bore him along,
And softly laid him down, and so they floated forth.
Then it came to pass as Merlin had erstwhile said
That measureless sorrow from Arthur's departure should be;
Britons yet believe that he still is alive
And dwelleth in Avalon with fairest of all elves;
Britons still think that Arthur is coming again.



A TOURNAMENT SCENE IN THE MIDDLE AGES

The Metrical Romances.—Through the Normans England became a sharer in that vast stock of chivalric stories which formed the popular literature of southwestern Europe in the Middle Ages. These stories were arranged in metrical form by poet-minstrels called "trouvères," who recited their productions in courts and

castles. Long, rambling tales of adventure dealing with giants, dragons, knights, robbers, dwarfs, hapless maidens, and victorious chevaliers, the metrical romances made a strong appeal to the mediaeval imagination. The material out of which they were put together came from the Orient, from Italy, from France itself, and from Britain. We may, for convenience, divide these metrical romances into four great cycles: (1) the **Troy Cycle,** containing stories about the Trojan War and its heroes; (2) the **Alexander Cycle,** centering about Alexander the Great; (3) the **Charlemagne Cycle,** celebrating the adventures of Charlemagne and his twelve peers; and (4) the **Arthurian Cycle,** a great collection of legends about the wonderful exploits and virtues of King Arthur and his knights.

Of these four cycles the Arthurian is the largest and the most fascinating, the richest mine of romantic tales into which the nameless French poets of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries dug for treasures. Many of these Norman-French romances were turned into English by various writers, whose names we do not know, during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, just as Layamon had, a little earlier, enlarged upon Wace's French version of Geoffrey's book of stories. The English versions of the French poems are not mere translations, but usually free adaptations showing individual skill and sometimes even a noteworthy genius for vivid narration. Besides the four great cycles, there were a number of metrical romances written on purely English and Danish subjects, such as *Guy of Warwick, Bevis of Hampton, King Horn,* and *Havelock the Dane:* in these, though based on French originals, the old Teutonic fondness for the sea and rough adventure is again manifest; while in the French romances proper and the English revisions of them, more is made of romantic love and knightly courtesy and of the gentler aspects of nature with its richer coloring in southern climes. In the long list of these metrical romances one in particular deserves prominent mention and wide reading both because of its intrinsic charm and its reflection of the new spirit in English literature. This is *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight.*

Gawayne and the Green Knight.—The story is about an exploit of Sir Gawayne, one of the noblest of Arthur's knights.

One New Year's day while King Arthur and his court are feasting at Camelot, a gigantic Green Knight rides into the hall on a green horse and makes this challenge: the Green Knight will allow any one of the knights to smite off his head on condition that this same knight shall receive a like blow in return from him twelve months hence. After the consternation caused by this strange proposition has a little subsided, Gawayne is permitted by the king to accept the challenge. He accordingly severs with one blow of the stranger's big battle-ax the Green Knight's head from his shoulders. The trunk picks up the head and holds it out while the lips speak to Gawayne, directing him to appear at the Green Chapel the next New Year's day for fulfilment of the compact.

As the year draws toward an end Gawayne sets out upon his perilous journey. Along the way he has encounters with all sorts of monsters and many hairbreadth escapes. At last on Christmas eve he reaches a fair castle, and after being assured that the Green Chapel is not far off, he is courteously invited by the lord of the castle to spend several days as his guest. His host, as soon as the Christmas festivities are over, makes ready for a three-days' hunt, but before leaving proposes to his guest that at each day's end they two shall exchange whatever they may have won during the day. In the absence of the host the beautiful lady of the castle tries to induce Gawayne to make love to her, but failing in this, bestows upon him a kiss. This kiss Gawayne gives to the lord upon his return at night, receiving in exchange a gift of game. The third day, however, the lady, in addition to the usual kiss, offers Gawayne a green lace girdle which, he is told, will save him from mortal harm. This gift Gawayne, thinking of the giant's ax and his own neck, receives, but conceals it from his host at the end of the day, giving him only the kiss.

On New Year's morning he rides forth to the Green Chapel, a gloomy cave in a desolate region, and faces the Green Knight who has just been sharpening his ax. True to his promise of a year ago, Gawayne bends his neck. The giant raises the ax twice without striking, but the third time he lets it graze Gawayne's neck slightly wounding him. Gawayne now springs back and draws his sword to defend himself, reminding the Green Knight that the compact has been fulfilled. Then all is explained: the Green Knight reveals himself as the host at the castle; he knows everything that has taken place—the wooing of the lady and the gift of the girdle. The whole thing had been planned by him and the fairy-woman Morgain as a test of Gawayne's faithfulness. Gawayne's only transgression was the concealment of the belt, and for this he had been slightly wounded; otherwise he would have escaped unhurt. Ashamed of his weakness, Gawayne wishes to return the

green lace, but the Green Knight presses it upon him. He returns to Camelot and tells of his adventure, in honor of which the knights and ladies of Arthur's court ever afterwards wore girdles of green.

The unknown poet who wrote *Gawayne and the Green Knight* is the most gifted writer of pre-Chaucerian romance. The date of the poem, which is written in the West Midland dialect, is about 1350, and the original giant of the head-severing story was Cuchulinn of the Irish folk-tales. *Gawayne and the Green Knight* abounds in picturesque descriptions of wild nature, details of mediaeval dress, armor, and architecture; the arrangement of episodes is artistic, so that the interest does not flag; while the moral purpose is clearly yet not obtrusively evident.

The Pearl.—In the same manuscript with *Sir Gawayne and the Green Knight* is a sad and beautiful poem named *The Pearl*, in which a father tells of the vision he had of his dead daughter.

One summer day he fell asleep upon her grave and saw in a dream a crystal river with gleaming cliffs. At the foot of one of these sat a maiden clothed in bright garments adorned with pearls, and with one large pearl shining in her bosom. She seemed to come toward him as he tried in vain to cross the river. To his question whether she is indeed his own lost "pearl" (French, *marguerite*), the maid replies that his pearl is not really lost. She then explains some of the heavenly mysteries, mildly reproves his too violent grief, and finally shows him afar off on golden mountains the celestial city with gem-decked walls and streets. Gazing he dimly discerns in the city a long procession of virgins, and at last recognizes among them his own "little queen." In the effort to plunge into the stream and reach her on the other side, the dreamer awakes to find himself weeping on her grave:

"Then woke I in that garden fair;
My head upon that mound was laid,
There where my Pearl had strayed below.
I roused me, and felt in great dismay,
And, sighing to myself, I said:
'Now all be to that Prince's pleasure.'"

Religious Poetry and Prose.—Although a conventional religious element may be found in the metrical romances of the Arthurian cycle, these poems are not concerned with Biblical stories but with Celtic legends influenced by the newer national ideals.

The Pearl is, to be sure, essentially a religious poem, but the strong personal note, the heightened emotional coloring, and the romantic descriptive touches give it a lyric spirit; it is, indeed, an elegy. There is, however, a fairly well-defined group of metrical and prose productions in the Anglo-Norman period which are more formally religious, and which, in general, reflect more specifically the native English temper. From this group four pieces may be chosen as typical: *The Moral Ode* (*Poema Morale*), *Ormulum*, *Cursor Mundi*, *Ancren Riwle.*

The Moral Ode belongs to the later twelfth century, and judging by the number of surviving copies, it must have been very popular. The poem is made up of moral and religious precepts: the author begins his metrical sermon by lamenting his ill-spent life, and then proceeds to exhort his reader to live wisely; finally he goes on to depict the terrors of Hell and the joys of Heaven, frightening the reader now with the one, and alluring him now with the other to keep him in the strait way. The *Moral Ode* sets forth a practical philosophy of life which is based on the motive of self-preservation. The poem is in fourteen-syllable lines arranged in rhyming couplets, a new form in English literature.

The Ormulum is a long and tedious metrical paraphrase of such parts of the Bible as were commonly used in the church services for the whole year, followed by an interpretation and application. It is a kind of primer of religious instruction, and hardly deserves to be classed as a poem in the modern sense. The author explains that his book is called *Ormulum* "because Orm made it." So careful was he to indicate the proper spelling and pronunciation of words as used in his part of England (Lincolnshire) at the beginning of the thirteenth century, that the *Ormulum* is exceedingly valuable to-day in the study of the English language.

Cursor Mundi is a rhyming universal history from creation to doomsday, a mixture of Biblical narratives and religious and secular legends. The writer begins by remarking that people like to hear romances of Alexander, Julius Caesar, the Siege of Troy, King Arthur, and Charlemagne; but that he will sing of divine love and the most loyal and beautiful of all ladies, the

Virgin Mary. He accordingly writes with the deliberate purpose of competing with the four great cycles of romance, not primarily to instruct, but to entertain and amuse the common people of England who could read no French. He aspired, then, to compose an interesting "religious romance," and he succeeded; for the *Cursor Mundi* was immensely popular. We must bear in mind that the metrical romances, secular and religious, were the novels of the Middle Ages, and that the length of these narrative poems was a positive merit in a time of few books when men and women loved to hear or read an old story over and over again. This long *Cursor Mundi* of the early fourteenth century, besides being a storehouse of such rich and varied material as the credulous mediaeval mind delighted in, is in its vast scope and subject matter very like the great cycles of miracle plays which developed a little later.

In charm and originality the greatest prose work of this period is the *Ancren Riwle*, or *Rule of Anchoresses*. The purpose of the little book is to provide spiritual counsel for three women in southern England who had dedicated themselves to a secluded religious life. The advice which the writer, a good old bishop, gives these recluses sounds to modern ears peculiarly quaint and sometimes provokes the smile of quiet humor. Among the very few privileges allowed these ladies, here are two:

> Ye, my dear sisters, shall have no beast except one cat. Though if any one must needs have a cow, let her see to it that the cow neither annoy nor harm anybody, nor that her own thought be too much fastened upon it. A nun ought not to have anything which draws her heart outward.

The section dealing with "Speech" contains an allegorical interpretation of the scriptural words about bridling the tongue:

> A bridle is not only in the mouth of the horse, but part of it is upon his eyes, and part of it on his ears; for it is very necessary that all three should be bridled. But the iron is put in the mouth and on the light tongue; for there is most need to hold when the tongue is in talk, and has begun to run. For we often intend, when we begin to speak, to say little, and well-placed words; but the tongue is slippery, for it wadeth in the wet, and slideth on from few to many words.

The *Ancren Riwle*, because of its simple, direct language, its pervasive human quality, and its soundness of moral tone, is a memorable piece of early Middle English prose literature.

In this Anglo-Norman period many didactic poems—poems intended to teach a moral lesson—were written, such as "The Owl and the Nightingale" and "The Debate of the Body and the Soul." In the first poem an owl, representing the philosophic and religious attitude toward life, debates with a nightingale, representing the joyous and beautiful—the one speaking for the moral sense, the other for the aesthetic. The nightingale on a fair blossoming branch looks disdainfully at the owl on an old ivy-grown trunk near by: each speaker attacks the appearance, habits, purpose, and singing of the other. A dramatic climax is reached when a wren interferes and suggests that the case be submitted to a neighboring wise man for decision. The poem shows unusual dramatic power and romantic appreciation, sounds the note of freedom, and reveals a traveled poet of wide outlook, who, it may be added, inclines to side with the nightingale. "The Debate of the Body and the Soul" is a dialogue between the opposing sides of man's nature, each reproaching the other for its present plight, until devils appear and carry off the soul to be tortured: an impressive religious poem on an old theme, the dual nature of man, which has always attracted poets and novelists.

Lyrics.—French influence stimulated song-making throughout England, for France was the land of troubadours upon whom had descended the winsome spirit of romantic legend. The English had their folk songs, or ballads, songs of the soil, of which we shall speak later; but the mingling of Norman fancy with Saxon sincerity resulted in a blossoming of lyric verse on springtime and love which is full of freshness and charm even to-day. In some of these songs there is a mystical blending of religion and love; as, for instance, in the "Love Rune" of Thomas of Hales (1250), a little poem on the fleeting nature of worldly wealth and glory and in praise of Heavenly Love. But more interesting than the religious lyrics of that time are the songs of youth and outdoor joys when nature awakes. Lightsome, "blithe and debonair"

are the famous lines of the "Cuckoo Song," and straight from the English heart:

Sumer is icumen in, lhude sing, cucu;
Groweth sed and bloweth med and springth the wude nu;
Sing, cucu.
Awe bleteth after lomb, lhouth after calue cu;
Bulluc sterteth, bucke verteth, murie sing, cucu.
Cucu, cucu,
Well singes thu, cucu; ne swik thu nauer nu.

Summer is a-coming in, loudly sing, cuckoo;
Groweth seed and bloweth mead and springeth the woodland now;
Sing, cuckoo.
Ewe bleateth after lamb, loweth after calf cow;
Bullock starteth, buck darteth, merrily sing, cuckoo.
Cuckoo, cuckoo,
Well singest thou, cuckoo; never be thou silent now.

Perhaps the most appealing of these lyrics of spring and love are the two that follow—one to "Alysoun," full of dreamy grace and beauty; the other redolent of flowers and almost vocal with bird-songs:

Bytuene Mershe and Averil
When spray beginneth to springe,
The lutel foul hath hire wyl
On hyre lud to synge;
Ich libbe in love-longinge
For semlokest of alle thynge.
He may me blisse bringe;
Icham in hire baundoun.
An hendy hap ichabbe yhent,
Ichot from hevene it is me sent,
From alle wymmen mi love is lent
And lyht on Alysoun.

Between March and April
When bloomy spray begins to spring,
The little bird hath her will
In her song to sing;

Then live I in love-longing
For the fairest earthly thing
That may me blessing bring—
I am indeed her own.
A gracious fate to me is lent,
I know from heaven 'tis to me sent,
From women all, my heart is bent
And lights on Alysoun.

—*From* "Alysoun" (about 1300).

Lenten ys come with love to toune
With blosmen and with briddes roune;
That al this blisse bryngeth.
Dayes-eyes in this dales;
Notes suete of nyhtegales;
Uch foul song singeth.

Spring is come with love to town,
With blossoms and with song-birds' sound;
That all this blessing bringeth;
Daisies in these dales,
Sweet notes of nightingales,
Each bird songs singeth.

—*From* "Springtime" (about 1300).

Form of Language and Verse by 1350.—By the middle of the fourteenth century the Norman-French and the English had become one people with an evergrowing sense of national vigor. During the three centuries since the Conquest the native language had been transformed from a homogeneous tongue with many inflections and a limited and stiff vocabulary into a composite speech with few inflections and a rich and flexible vocabulary, capable, in the hands of a master, of rare grace, reach, and even subtlety of expression. The form of poetry had changed from the alliterative, heavily accented, two-part line to the end-rhyme verse of regular line-length and more nearly alternate stress. The stanza form had also become popular, through French models, together with various groupings of lines in stanzas. Some later poets—Langland, for example—still clung to the old alliterative verse; others, like the author of *Gawayne and the Green Knight,* mixed alliteration and rhyme; still others followed the French rhyming usage, but held to the English accent. These

last, as the result proved, were the true prophets; for it is out of this merging of English stress and French rhyme that the wonderful lyric effectiveness of English verse has largely come. Indeed, the lyrics just quoted illustrate this, and they are but the earnest of more exquisite music. By this time, therefore, both the language and the poetic form were fit instruments for the use of some new Englishman who could by his creative genius raise one of the Middle English dialects out of the chaotic tangle of our mediaeval speech and establish it as the standard medium of national literary expression. The man who was to do that was at this time a small boy playing in the streets of London, and his name was Geoffrey Chaucer.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1066-1350)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Middle English Poetry	
Layamon's Brut, (about 1205)	Norman Conquest (Battle of Hastings), 1066
Metrical Romances (four great cycles): Gawayne and the Green Knight, The Pearl, etc.	Reign of William I, 1066-87
Moral and Religious Poems: Moral Ode, Cursor Mundi, Ormulum, Owl and Nightingale, Debate of Body and Soul, etc.	Reign of William II, Henry I, and Stephen, 1087-1154
Songs of Love and Spring	Reigns of Henry II, Richard I, John, Henry III, Edward I, II, 1154-1327
II. Middle English Prose	
The Ancren Riwle (about 1215)	Loss of Normandy to England, 1204
Ayenbite of Inwit (Remorse of Conscience)	Magna Charta, 1215
Chronicles	House of Commons organized, 1265
	Battle of Bannockburn, 1314

The Influence on Literature was Chiefly French.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Jewett's The Story of the Normans ("Stories of the Nations"), Freeman's Short History of the Norman Conquest, Schofield's English Liter-

ature from the Norman Conquest to Chaucer (Macmillan), Lewis's Beginnings of English Literature (Ginn), Emerson's Middle English Reader (Macmillan), Gawayne and the Green Knight translated by Weston, The Pearl translated by Gollanz, Geoffrey of Monmouth's History (in Giles's Six Old English Chronicles—"Bohn Library")

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CHAPTER THREE

THE AGE OF CHAUCER

1350-1400

Fourteenth-century England.—The fourteenth century was a time of change. The spell of the Middle Ages was waning and the dawn of the new day of the Renaissance was not far off. The transition from the old order to the new was, as usual, marked by much unrest. Many things which had been regarded as fixed and absolute were seen to be more or less fluid and relative. The people at large, particularly in England, were awakening from the lethargy of mediaeval modes of life and thought and beginning to ask questions. Restive under the restraints of Feudalism with its burdensome exactions and less responsive than of old to the glamour of Chivalry, the great middle class, prosperous through expanding commerce and trade, was breaking away from the established order and making a distinctive place for itself in the nation's life. In this century the House of Commons became a part of the English Parliament, and from that day to this has stood, with varying degrees of success, for the popular will. Below the middle class was the peasantry in rebellious protest against a condition of grinding poverty. The new age, we shall find, was at heart interested in secular and political movements rather than in religious and feudal; and this new interest meant a radical departure from the ideals of the Middle Ages.

In England, in particular, we find the new democratic spirit in sharp conflict with the old political, social, and religious conformity of a century or two earlier, when independence of thought and action was discouraged with feudal and ecclesiastical menace. Since those days England had changed much. In the first place,

the long struggle with France, known as the Hundred Years' War, had brought to light through action a new consciousness of power. Victories like Crécy and Poitiers, by uniting the English nation, helped to create a new patriotism. They were all Englishmen now: Norman and Saxon had been welded into one by the pressure of war. In the next place, the factional quarrels of the Church, together with the notoriously corrupt lives of many of the clergy, caused the loss of ecclesiastical prestige to such an extent that kings were becoming more independent of papal domination, and the people distinctly distrustful of the religious orders. The general result of all these forms of restlessness was a steady growth in nationality and liberality of mind; but the most significant thing of all was the beginning of social democracy in England. This would mean the rise of a more virile and realistic literature, and at no very distant day the hospitable welcome of new learning and new art from Italy.

This England of Chaucer was withal a picturesque and merry England. The enchantment of the mediaeval world had not vanished yet. Men and women dressed in gay colors; lords were attended by their gorgeously attired retainers; pilgrims in motley companies wended their way to the shrines of saints; mailclad and helmeted knights rode in tournaments; processions resplendent in livery lent color to the streets; every trade had its peculiar costume. London was a small walled city with narrow, winding, dirty streets and half-timbered houses painted in bright colors. Within these houses were great pictured tapestries along the walls and curiously carved furniture. The Thames was a clear and shining stream bordered by daisied meadows and spanned, in the town, by quaint old London Bridge with its towers and its shops on each side of a middle passageway leading across to Southwark, where stood the old Tabard Inn and the round wooden buildings used for bearbaiting and cockfighting. Throughout England were vast forests and marshes and stretches of wild land. Outlaws infested the highways, while deer, wolves, and boars still roamed the forests. It was a rough, boisterous life, as full of dramatic contrasts as the setting was variegated.

Virtue and vice jostled each other; splendor and squalor touched each other; coarseness, crudeness, ignorance, superstition were joined with refinement, beauty, learning, and saintliness. A motley world was this England in which Chaucer lived; and yet a very vital world it was, with widening human interests beyond the little sea-girt isle.

GEOFFREY CHAUCER (1340-1400)

His Life.—Chaucer was born in London about 1340. His father, John Chaucer, was a vintner, or wine-seller, a member of that large and increasingly important merchant class in English life. Through his business relations with the court John Chaucer enjoyed the favor of Edward III, and this partly accounts for his son's early connection with the royal household. Geoffrey became a page at sixteen or seventeen to Princess Elizabeth, wife of Prince Lionel, son of King Edward III, and a year or two later joined the English army in the war with France, whither many ambitious youths of fortune and social position had hastened. He was made prisoner there at nineteen or twenty. Ransomed by the king after a short imprisonment, he returned to London and resumed his services in the royal household. When about twenty-seven he was pensioned for life, was attached to the court as "valet of the king's chamber" and a little later as a squire. In 1369 he again joined the army in France. Before this date, however, Chaucer had married Philippa, a maid of honor to the queen and, as it appears, sister to the third wife of John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster.

Just what educational training Chaucer had meanwhile had, we do not certainly know; but we may be sure that he had studied Latin and French and such scientific books as that unscientific age afforded. Later in life Chaucer wrote a treatise on the Astrolabe for his "little son Lowis" which shows considerable knowledge of scientific subjects as they were then understood. We know that he was a wide reader and a keen observer, and the best part of his education must have come through his general reading, his close observation of the busy life about him, and his extensive travels. In France he had seen the romantic art of war—for the mediaeval flower of Chivalry was still in bloom—and at home he lived at the brilliant court of a knightly king. These experiences were invaluable in the educational development of a poet.

After Chaucer's return from France at the age of thirty his diplomatic career began. During the next ten or fifteen years he was sent on a number of important diplomatic missions, first to Flanders, and then to Italy, visiting the famous cities of Florence, Pisa, Genoa, and Padua, all great centers of literature and learning. In Italy he may have met Boccaccio and Pe-

GEOFFREY CHAUCER

trarch: at all events, he became deeply interested in the writings of the great Italian story-teller and his contemporary, the poet of lyric love; and he read with eager intelligence the "mystic, unfathomable song" of Dante, the mighty Florentine, then a half-century dead. These visits to Italy, the land of sentiment and of the new learning which was soon to spread over Europe, had a profound influence upon Chaucer, as we shall presently see in considering his poetry.

Chaucer's patron during these years was the powerful John of Gaunt, younger son of the king, who upon the poet's return from Italy made him controller of the customs, an important position demanding business ability and experience. This office Chaucer filled with credit, showing himself a hard-working official and at the same time a diligent student and writer. This and other recognition he received from his princely patron, such as pensions and personal gifts and appointments on more diplomatic errands, until 1386 when he became a member of Parliament. About this time the political party of his benefactor went out of power and as a consequence Chaucer lost his position, became poor, gave up his house, and sold his pensions for ready money. The years of poverty he spent in retirement,

reading much, no doubt, observing with quiet humor the men and manners around him and writing those verse-novels, the *Canterbury Tales*, by which he is best known to-day. When in 1399 Henry IV, son of John of Gaunt, succeeded the weak Richard II, Chaucer sent to the new king a humorous little poetic appeal, "The Complaint to his Empty Purse," in response to which King Henry promptly granted a pension to his father's old friend. But the poet was to enjoy his returned prosperity for scarcely a year: in 1400 he died and was buried in Westminster Abbey, the first of the long line of England's famous men to rest in the Poets' Corner of that historic church.

His Personality.—Always an interested spectator of events and a keen observer of men, Chaucer was nevertheless somewhat apart from them, kindly but reticent. He appeared to the host of the Tabard to have a downward look:

> Thou lookest as thou wouldest find a hare,
> Forever upon the ground I see thee stare.

This is the meditative attitude of an observant nature in which there is a blending of the man of the world, the philosopher, and the poet. Chaucer looked lovingly down at the daisies and other modest meadow flowers and listened with quiet joy to the songs of birds. He loved the outdoors, though much of his day was spent within office walls or in city streets; but when the month of May was come—

> Farewel my boke and my devocioun!

After the day's work was done, impelled by the literary man's eagerness for reading and study, he would hasten home and pore upon his book, "as domb as any stone," until his eyes were dazed. We may think of him, therefore, as a well-poised, searching reader of human nature, keenly alive to the humorous elements in the motley throng that moved around him. His own pervasive humor, indeed, makes Chaucer one of the most delightful of companions; and because of his humor and sound sense, his personal knowledge of the world and his large tolerance, he looked at men and things with shrewd yet kindly eyes.

His Works.—Period of French Influence. Chaucer's life is usually divided into three periods in accordance with the three

predominating influences discoverable in his works—the French, the Italian, and the English. In his youth Chaucer must have read widely in the French romances: he spent some years in a court which was still practically French, and he was much in France. Naturally, therefore, he turned to French models when he began to write. The French poem most read and admired in those days in court and castle was the *Roman de la Rose*, a long and involved allegory about Love, figured as a Rose growing in a mystic garden and standing for a Princess Beautiful whom a lover, much hindered by such rivals as Hate, Envy, Jealousy, and other personified passions, was trying to win. This favorite romance Chaucer translated into English verse before his thirtieth year, and so far as we know this was his first serious literary work. It is a significant fact that at a time when French and Latin were the languages respectively of court and learning Chaucer, the friend of courtiers and scholars, should have deliberately set himself to writing in the language of the people; though it was natural, indeed, that he should serve his apprenticeship under the influence of the allegorical love-poetry of France by turning into his native speech the *Romaunt of the Rose*, the most popular poem of the Middle Ages.

Far more important than this venture, however, is the poem called the *Book of the Duchesse*, or the *Dethe of Blanche the Duchesse*, written as a tribute to the first wife of his patron John of Gaunt, Blanche of Lancaster, who died in 1369. While the *Book of the Duchesse* contains charming passages here and there—as, for instance, the account of the poet's awakening in his tapestried chamber to the music of birds' songs and the huntsmen's horns without, followed by the noise and movement of the hunt in the varied greenwood—the poem as a whole has much of the tediousness of the conventional French romances. It is in fact an imitation of Ovid and the French models, but it gives promise of better things. Another first fruit of Chaucer's genius is the "Complaint to Pity," a graceful little love poem, and there are besides many minor ballads in the prevailing fashion.

Period of Italian Influence.—From about 1370 to 1385 Chaucer frequently visited Italy on diplomatic business and in this way came directly under Italian literary influence. Several important poems written during this period reveal how the genius of the poet was expanding under the inspiration he gained from reading the works of Dante and Boccaccio and of Dante's master, Virgil. *Troilus and Criseyde* shows the most direct Italian influence, being a free adaptation of Boccaccio's *Il Filostrato* (the love-struck one), the same theme which Shakespeare used later in one of his plays. Chaucer greatly improved the original poem not only in structural and metrical harmony but also in realistic tone by making it reflect the social ideals of his own age and, what is more important still, by infusing into it some of his own delightful humor and pathos.

The *Hous of Fame* and the *Legende of Goode Women*, two unfinished poems, also belong to this period. In the *Hous of Fame* the poet dreams that he is carried by a great eagle to the Temple of Fame on a high hill in a sandy waste to which come rumors from all over the world: the house is "writen ful of names," many of which disappear as the rocky ice-foundation of the hall melts; but the oldest names are as legible as ever. In the *Legende of Goode Women* Chaucer represents himself as viewing a procession of nineteen ladies and attendants which passes as he sleeps in his garden of daisies. The god of love, who leads Queen Alcestis ahead of the procession, reproaches the poet for having written lightly of woman in *Troilus* and other poems; but Alcestis, the ever gracious lady, reminds Cupid that Chaucer has also written the *Book of the Duchesse* and the *Parlement of Foules* in which woman is glorified. She asks that he be forgiven provided he will now write the story of "women true in loving all their life" and set forth the shame of men who were false to them. Of these nineteen ladies in the train of Queen Alcestis (presumably Anne of Bohemia, wife of Richard II) Chaucer purposed to tell the legends; it is likely, indeed, that he intended to include all famous women who had suffered grief in love, but growing tired of his lengthening task he wrote of only nine.

Before he composed the *Legende of Goode Women*—which was probably the last work of the Italian period and essentially a transition poem—Chaucer had written the *Parlement of Foules*, an allegory which is supposed to celebrate the marriage of King Richard to Anne of Bohemia in January, 1382. As usual in the poems of this period, the poet feigns that he dreamed the story he relates. In a beautiful park the birds are all assembled to decide which of three rival eagles shall win a fascinating female eagle (Anne of Bohemia), the successful suitor typifying Richard. The descriptive touches in this, as in the poems just mentioned, show Chaucer's fondness for the colorings of nature and the sounds of field and forest.

Period of English Influence.—*The Canterbury Tales.* The crowning work of Chaucer's life is the collection of twenty-four stories known as the *Canterbury Tales*, belonging within the ten or fifteen years from 1385 when his genius had come to full maturity. By this time his English temperament had thoroughly assimilated all that was foreign in his reading, and he now turned to home scenes and fellow-Englishmen for setting and characters, though many of his plots are taken from foreign sources. Indeed Chaucer, like Shakespeare, usually borrowed his plots and then proceeded to re-create them by vitalizing them with characters and customs of his own day.

The plan of the *Canterbury Tales* as outlined by Chaucer was an ambitious one, for it contemplated a group of more than one hundred and twenty tales strung together by prologues and epilogues. Less than one fourth of this vast design was actually accomplished. The thirty-one or two pilgrims, including the poet, who set out one April morning from the Tabard Inn in Southwark, just across the Thames from London, on a pilgrimage to Canterbury, were to tell four stories each, two going and two returning. This was at the suggestion of Harry Bailey, the jolly host of the Tabard, who wished in this way to enliven the leisurely journey of three or four days there and back. Moreover, as a stimulus to tale-telling and incidentally for the ultimate profit of the thrifty host himself, Bailey proposed that upon their

return a supper should be given at his inn to the best story-teller at the common expense; and to this they all agreed. The old town of Canterbury in Kent was a favorite resort of pilgrims, for in its great cathedral was the shrine of Archbishop Thomas à Becket, who had been murdered in 1170 and whose bones were popularly believed to work miraculous cures upon the sick. While the pilgrimage was undertaken ostensibly from a religious motive, in keeping with the prevalent mediaeval custom of visiting the shrines of saints, the main interest of Chaucer's pilgrims was no doubt the prospect of a spring outing with several days of good fellowship; for April with its "showers sweet" had come:

Thanne longen folk to goon on pilgrimages.

It was a democratic gathering which Chaucer joined that April night at the Tabard, representing all the active interests of English life from knighthood to farming; and it was on just such a journey as this that the various classes of society could come together. For the time being all would lay aside their prejudices and antagonisms and with perfect freedom adapt themselves to the haps of travel. Led by the host to the tune of the miller's bagpipe the motley crowd of pilgrims went on their way from Southwark to Canterbury—

The hooly, blisful martir for to seke
That hem hath holpen, whan that they were seeke.

Lots were drawn to determine who should tell the first tale and the choice fell upon the knight, of whose story of "Palamon and Arcite" we shall presently speak. All the tales except two are in verse; they follow a general prologue in which the principal persons of the pilgrimage are introduced.

The Prologue.—The "Prologue" to the *Canterbury Tales* consists of a series of realistic character-sketches, so true to life, indeed, that it makes interesting reading to-day when literature is mainly concerned with real men and women. Up to this time literature had been almost altogether romantic,—that is, it had dealt with persons removed from the range of ordinary human experience,

such as knightly warriors, kings, and princes—heroes of superhuman prowess and achievement; and the reading of literature was largely confined to the nobility in court and castle and to scholars. But when Chaucer brought together a number of characters drawn from everyday life, talked familiarly about them, and made them talk freely of themselves and of subjects of common interest, he made literature democratic and human, widened its range and its appeal.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL
The tomb of Thomas a Becket was in this cathedral

The men and women in the "Prologue" are individuals as well as types—each has a distinct personality and is, at the same time, representative of a class. Hitherto there had been types, but few real individuals; and while it is true that Chaucer does not as a rule give common personal names to these characters, he nevertheless presents them so vividly and humanly that we feel they

actually lived. The "Prologue" is therefore a genuine bit of realism. Each important vocation of contemporary English society has its representative. There is the chivalrous and modest knight who has fought victoriously in Europe, Asia, and Africa; and his son, a young squire, gaily dressed, "singing and fluting all the day," accomplished in social graces and so deep in love that at night he sleeps no more than "doth a nightingale." There is the coy and smiling prioress who affects court manners, is particularly dainty at table, and so tender-hearted that she weeps to see a mouse caught in a trap; and there is the sleek, fat monk with sporting propensities who keeps fast horses, loves delicate food, and fastens his hood with a fancy gold pin. There is the merchant talking boastfully of his clever bargains at buying and selling; the lawyer with his string of legal precedents and voluble account of cases won; the doctor who treats his patients according to astrology and whose "studie was but litel on the

Bible"; the shipman whose beard had been shaken with many a tempest; the plowman, a faithful worker who loved his neighbor as himself; the gossipy woman of Bath who had been five times married; the thieving miller with his big mouth and his bagpipe. All these and others Chaucer pictures to us, now with keen satire, now with sly humor, and now with serious admiration. Two of his fellow-travelers, in particular, attract him by their devotion and sincerity: the clerk, or scholar, of Oxford, whose zeal for learning was so great that he spent all the money he could get from his friends for books, preferring to have at his bed's head

> Twenty bookes, clad in blak and red,
> Of Aristotle and his philosophye,

than rich robes or musical instruments; and the "poor parson of a town" who was rich in holy thought and work, "a shepherd and no mercenarie," faithfully teaching and visiting his parishioners and sharing with the poor his little income, all the time trying

> To drawen folk to hevene by fairnesse,
> By good ensample, this was his bisynesse.
> He wayted after no pompe and reverence,
> Ne maked him a spyced conscience,
> But Cristes lore, and his apostles twelve,
> He taughte, but first he folwed it himselve.

The Tales.—The twenty-four *Canterbury Tales* cover a wide range of subjects, each story being more or less adapted to the temperament and occupation of the supposed narrator as portrayed in the "Prologue." The knight, for instance, relates the chivalric contest between two friends, Palamon and Arcite, for the hand of Emily, a fair maiden seen by the two rivals from their prison windows after they had been captured on the field of battle and taken to Athens. This is in many respects the best of the *Canterbury Tales*. Though to the modern reader it seems unduly long, it is well to remember that the "Knight's Tale" is only about one fifth as long as Boccaccio's romance from which it was borrowed. The prioress tells a pathetic story of the martyr-

dom of little Hugh of Lincoln who, after his throat was cut by his cruel foe, sang with clear voice "Alma Redemptoris" in praise of the Virgin. "The Nun's Priest's Tale" is about a lordly Chanticleer who was seized while crowing by a flattering Fox, and who soon turns the tables on the Fox by persuading him to open his mouth and hurl defiance at his pursuers, with the result that Chanticleer gets loose and triumphantly flies up into a tree. Chanticleer had, in the proud act of crowing, shut his eyes at the wrong time and been caught; while the Fox, as it turned out, had opened his mouth at the wrong moment and lost his prize. The moral of the fable is evident. The clerk tells the tale of Patient Griselda who suffered so many indignities from her husband and yet remained faithful; and the squire, as befits his youth and romantic disposition, tells the story of Cambuscan and the flying horse of brass, and the magic ring and mirror. The miller and the Wife of Bath being of a coarser grain relate stories of a less edifying nature than those of the more refined members of the company.

Chaucer represents himself as telling two very tiresome tales, one in verse, "Sir Thopas," and the other in prose, "Melibeus." The first is an imitation of the long-winded mediaeval romances, which Chaucer with malicious humor inflicts upon the company, until the host stops him by calling it "drasty rhyming." Thereupon Chaucer tells a still more dreary tale. And so the story-telling is supposed to go on as the pilgrims wend their way to Canterbury.

Chaucer's Contribution.—Chaucer was a man of affairs as well as a poet. Most of his life was spent in government business, and such leisure as he could find he gave to study and writing. The knowledge he gained from books was seasoned with his practical knowledge of men and things; for the outward aspects of human life he had a quick eye; about the deeper meaning of it all he did not greatly trouble himself. Satirist of the moral and religious corruption of the time, Chaucer was evidently sympathetic with efforts at reform in morals and religion, though he himself was not a reformer. Indeed, he often appears to regard

violations of propriety in speech and act with a sort of amused tolerance. Frank, robust, wholesome, he was partly mediaeval in temper and delighted to depict the movement and color of life about him without reflective comments either of strong praise or impassioned censure. He was, then, above all else a great story-teller. In the art of direct and picturesque narration few have equaled him and probably no one in our literature has surpassed him. Compared with the rambling and more or less wooden romances in fashion when he began to write, the poetic narratives of Chaucer have artistic restraint and naturalness of tone; they strike one as modern and human. He combined, in truth, Norman grace and wit with Saxon solidity and seriousness, and at his best he illustrates the complete amalgamation of the two peoples. Chaucer's contribution is therefore immensely important.

First of all, he wrote lifelike, entertaining narrative characterized by genuine grace, common sense, sly humor, and simple pathos. In the next place, he made of the East Midland dialect a flexible and dignified medium of expression for English-speaking people. Until Chaucer wrote, there was no one form of English which all might adopt. He gave such unity and vigor to his own dialect that it rapidly grew into favor with those who read and those who wrote. In this way Chaucer's Midland speech became a model for imitation and so ultimately the standard literary language of England. In the third place, Chaucer gave to English verse a new melody and a greater variety of form. In the poetry of Chaucer there are three prevailing meters, besides certain French stanza-forms in the minor poems. The most common of the three principal measures is that used in the *Canterbury Tales*, the ten-syllable line of five accents arranged in rhyming couplets:

> Syngyng he was or floyting al the day;
> He was as fressh as is the month of May.

The next important meter occurs in *Troilus and Criseyde*. The lines have the same number of syllables and accents as those of

the *Canterbury Tales*, but they are arranged in seven-line stanzas with a different rhyme-scheme. This is called the Rhyme Royal. The third measure consists of lines of eight syllables, with four accents each, in rhyming couplets. This meter is used in the *Book of the Duchesse:*

> My wyndowes weren shet echon
> And through the glas the sunne shon
> Upon my bed with bryghte bemes,
> With many glade, gilden stremes.

In Chaucer's language more was made of vowel sounds than in modern English. The final *-e* was regularly sounded, except before a vowel or *h*, and so was final *-es*. The vowels in general were sounded much as the vowels in modern German, while the consonants were pronounced approximately as in modern English. Chaucer's verse should not be read with modern pronunciation if we would get the full music of the lines. With a little practice one may catch the lilt of the lines and their liquid effect, for Chaucer was a master of rhythm, the first writer to reveal the wonderful poetic possibilities of the English tongue. Appreciatively read, he is seen to be, as Dryden remarked, "a perpetual fountain of good sense" and, one may add, a limpid stream of agreeable sound.

CONTEMPORARIES OF CHAUCER

Langland.—Among the several contemporaries of Chaucer who deserve mention in literary history, William Langland may be put first because of the vigor and originality of his writing. Of Langland's life we know very little: he was a native, as it appears, of one of the western counties near the Welsh border, born about 1332. Among the peaceful Malvern Hills of Worcestershire he probably spent his early years as a shepherd, going up to London later to take some minor office in the church. Langland was of humble origin, though the son of a freeman; he early realized the unhappy condition of his own social class in the moral and religious corruption of the day. Independent in spirit and keenly

sensitive to the bitter inequalities of life, he stalked through the London streets a gaunt, russet-clad figure, an austere prophet of righteousness denouncing evil and calling on men to repent. His own poverty, together with his growing indignation at social injustice, made him outspoken against the pleasure-loving and money-seeking time-servers all around him in State and Church. By 1362 Langland had written an allegorical poem called *The Vision Concerning Piers the Plowman.* This he later revised and extended, so that in its final form the poem is three times the original length. The poet represents himself as having fallen asleep one May morning on Malvern Hills:

> Me byfel a ferly[1] of fairy me thoughte;
> I was wery forwandred[2] and went me to reste
> Under a brode banke bi a'bornes[3] side,
> And as I lay and lened and loked in the wateres,
> I slombred in a slepyng, it sweyved[4] so merye.
> Thanne gan I to meten[5] a merveilouse swevene[5];
> I seigh[6] a toure on a toft trielich[7] ymaked;
> A depe dale binethe, a dongeon thereinne,
> With depe dyches and derke and dredful of sight.
> A faire felde ful of folke fonde I there bytwene,
> Of alle manner of men, the mene and the riche.

The "fair field full of folk" is the world, in which all sorts of people are carrying on their own selfish vocations and seeking the favor of Lady Meed (Reward or Bribery), the symbol of social greed. Those who really do honest work have the fruits of their toil snatched away and wasted by idlers whom a corrupt society encourages. Then follows a vision of the Seven Deadly Sins who surround Piers (Peter) the Plowman beseeching him to show them the way to Truth or God. Piers, intent upon his plowing, sets them to work. Only through work can they find Truth and escape Hunger. Later visions deal with the true motives of the moral and religious life. Piers the simple plowman gradually develops until he is made to represent Christ; and with his triumph over death the poem ends. The dreamer awakes as the joyous Easter bells are ringing.

1 wonder. 2 weary with wandering. 3 brook's. 4 sounded. 5 dream. 6 saw. 7 choicely.

The poem of *Piers the Plowman* is an indictment and a protest—a vigorous arraignment of individual, social, and religious evil, and a call to clean and industrious living. It is a plea for the equality of man and the nobility of labor. Langland used the old Saxon alliterative meter which was still familiar to the popular ear, though already out of fashion, as we have seen. As a literary artist he is far inferior to Chaucer, lacking his grace and charm, his sense for structure, and his ability to tell a story entertainingly. Langland was primarily a reformer, speaking out bluntly in the older poetic form for the English conscience.

Wyclif.—John Wyclif, like Langland, made his appeal to the common people rather than to the privileged classes. Wyclif was himself a great scholar and theologian, educated at the University of Oxford and for a time Master of Balliol College. He clearly perceived the need of the people for religious instruction in their own tongue, and he accordingly taught them himself in sermons and tracts and sent out priests clad in coarse russet and carrying staves in their hands after the primitive apostolic manner. These wandering priests, or Lollards, preached to the people a simple and vital faith. Wyclif opposed the temporal power of the Church, even advocating the appropriation by the State of Church property. He was thus a religious reformer, a forerunner of Luther and the Protestant Reformation. Realizing that the Church was neglecting the people, he determined to put the Bible into their hands in their own speech as their immediate guide in religion. He accordingly set to work to translate the entire Bible into English, associating with himself a learned disciple, Nicholas of Hereford. With his aid the great task was accomplished before Wyclif's death in 1384. This translation from the Latin Vulgate, revised and simplified a few years later by John Purvey, has come down to us as the first great monument of our prose, fully entitling Wyclif to be called "father of English prose."

By putting the Bible into the hands of the people Wyclif rendered an invaluable service to literature, for a model of direct and simple prose was sorely needed in this time of dialects. The popularity of Wyclif's translation of the Scriptures rapidly made

for uniformity in spoken and written English. It is indeed the first of the several translations of the Bible, culminating in the King James Version of 1611, which have wrought themselves into the very bone and sinew of our language and literature. Aside from its literary value, the work of John Wyclif exerted an immense influence upon the religious and social conditions of England at a time of great unrest among an overburdened populace by emphasizing afresh the rights of the individual.

Gower.—Quite different in form and spirit from Langland's and Wyclif's is the work of the poet John Gower (1325–1408), the wealthy aristocrat and conservative. Although an extensive landholder in Kent, Gower spent most of his life in London where he was known at court. In later life he retired to the monastery connected with St. Mary's Church in Southwark, now St. Saviour's, where his sculptured recumbent figure above his tomb may still be seen, his head resting upon his three volumes. One of his books was written in Latin, one in French, and one in English, the poet evidently being uncertain which of the three languages would turn out to be standard in England. His English work, *Confessio Amantis* (The Lover's Confession), is a series of stories about a lover who makes confession to a priest of Venus, the framework of which is modeled after the famous mediaeval allegory, the *Roman de la Rose.* The characters are abstractions rather than living men and women; and while some of the stories are well told and the verse is polished and regular, the work as a whole is exceedingly tedious and therefore vastly inferior to Chaucer's. Gower looked backward too steadily to understand and vitally to reflect his own age: in his mind the peasants' revolts, the religious agitation, the general social restlessness, created only consternation; he was unable to read the signs of the times.

"Mandeville's Travels."—An entertaining volume of marvelous sights in distant lands, purporting to have been written by one Sir John Mandeville, appeared in the latter half of the fourteenth century and made a strong appeal to the popular fancy. The book seems to be a compilation from the works of Marco Polo

and other famous travelers, ancient and mediaeval, and "John Mandeville" about as fictitious a character as Gulliver or Robinson Crusoe. Whoever the compiler may have been, the book speaks for itself most delightfully; it was widely read and copied in an age which was almost childish in its thirst for wonders. Its great popularity is attested by the fact that three hundred manuscript copies are extant. The author does not claim to have seen all the marvels of which he tells, but those which he has seen he vouches for with naïve simplicity; others have come to him by report, and as to the truth of these he leaves the reader to judge for himself. He says that he passed through Tartary, Persia, Armenia, Lybia, Chaldea, Ethiopia, Amazonia, India, and various islands in those regions. He saw or heard of pygmies, giants, valleys of devils thick as grasshoppers, dragons, griffins, men with heads beneath their shoulders, fields of diamonds, the Terrestrial Paradise, and the wonderful land of Prester John, and many other extraordinary beings and countries. As "Sir John" intended his book to be a guide for pilgrims to Jerusalem, he prefixed a pious prologue to his diverting romance. Originally written in French, the volume as we have it is a clever translation into a prose which has distinct literary flavor and which no doubt afforded a welcome relief from the dry historical and theological prose of the day.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1350-1400)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Later Middle English Poetry	
Chaucer (1340-1400): French Period (Book of the Duchesse)	Reign of Edward III, 1327-1377
Italian Period (Legende of Goode Women), English Period (Canterbury Tales)	Reign of Richard II, 1377-1399
William Langland: Piers the Plowman	Battle of Crécy, 1346
John Gower: Confessio Amantis	English capture Calais, 1347
II. Later Middle English Prose	Beginning of Hundred Years' War with France, 1338
John Wyclif: Translation of the Bible (1384)	Black Death, 1349
"Sir John Mandeville": Travels	Rise of the "Lollards," followers of Wyclif (beginners of Reformation in England), 1378
	Wat Tyler's Rebellion, 1381

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS: Decline of Feudalism; Rise of the Middle Class; Norman and Saxon Welded into One; Signs of the Coming Renaissance and Reformation; The Beginning of Modern English in Chaucer.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Browne's Chaucer's England, Jusserand's English Wayfaring Life in the Fourteenth Century, Snell's The Age of Chaucer (Macmillan), Jenks's In the Days of Chaucer (Barnes), Lounsbury's Studies in Chaucer, Ward's Life of Chaucer (in "English Men of Letters"), Pollard's Chaucer Primer (Macmillan), Root's The Poetry of Chaucer (Houghton), Lowell's Essay on Chaucer (in "My Study Windows"), The Globe Chaucer (Macmillan), Warren's Piers Plowman Modernized, Sergeant's Wyclif ("Heroes of the Nation"), Mandeville's Travels ("Cassell's National Library")

CHAPTER FOUR

RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION PERIOD

From the Death of Chaucer to the Accession of Elizabeth

1400-1558

The Fifteenth Century: Beginnings of the Renaissance.— Political, social, and religious changes which had begun in the fourteenth century became well-defined movements during the hundred and fifty years following the death of Chaucer. Wars foreign and domestic engaged the thoughts and energies of the English nation, while political uprisings like Cade's Rebellion and religious revolt through the activities of the Lollards were upsetting the old order. The Hundred Years' War with France, though at first stimulating to English patriotism, finally resulted in the loss of France to England; the Wars of the Roses, that fierce factional strife between the houses of York and Lancaster, resulted in the death of Feudalism as a political influence in England; with the accession of the Tudors dawned an era of remarkable commercial and industrial prosperity; with the overthrow of the feudal nobility came a period of rest after the volcanic confusion of a century of turmoil. The land at last had peace and England was ready to benefit from the two most significant movements of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the Renaissance and the Reformation. The Renaissance was, strictly speaking, the rebirth of interest in the Greek and Roman classics; more broadly interpreted, the Renaissance means the transition from mediaeval to modern ways of thinking, a movement toward the liberation of mind and spirit from the narrowness of the Middle Ages. The Reformation was a movement for greater religious freedom, culminating in England in the dissolution of the monas-

teries and the separation from the Church of Rome in the reign of Henry VIII, during the first half of the sixteenth century.

The Renaissance found its earliest development in Italy, where during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries a remarkable group of writers, painters, and sculptors gave expression to the new enthusiasm for learning and art. Petrarch, poet and scholar, was leader in the revival of interest in the classics. A diligent student of antiquity and an enthusiastic interpreter of the classic spirit, he was the first of the Humanists,—a name applied to those who believed that a more liberal culture would come from the study of Greek and Latin literature than from devotion to mediaeval scholasticism with its barren logic and deadening philosophy. In painting and sculpture the Renaissance spirit manifested itself most notably in the wonderful creations of Raphael and Michael Angelo. In Italy this new liberalism, or widening of human interests, was chiefly literary and artistic; in Germany it was mainly religious, and showed itself in the successful struggle of Martin Luther for greater spiritual freedom.

The event, however, which gave impetus to the revival of learning in western Europe was the capture of Constantinople by the Turks in 1453. That city, the capital of the eastern part of the Roman Empire, was the storehouse of Greek literature after the fall of Rome and the residence of Greek scholars. Upon the capture of Constantinople by the Turks, many of these scholars fled to Italy taking with them their precious manuscripts. In this way an immense stimulus was given to the study of Greek literature not only in Italy but over western Europe in general. Two main streams of influence from the Renaissance, therefore, flowed into England—the literary and artistic from Italy, and the religious from Germany; but because of the disturbed political conditions of the fifteenth century the Renaissance did not find its fullest expression in England until the latter part of the sixteenth century. It is true that Chaucer had felt the impulses of the new literature in Italy and that Wyclif had spoken out for religious reform; but they were simply pioneers of the Renaissance

while England as a whole was not yet ready to welcome it unreservedly.

Inventions and Discoveries.—In various other directions this awakening of the human mind from the lethargy of the Middle Ages is clearly shown. The Renaissance was in truth a manifold movement, inspired by a fresh and even fierce intellectual curiosity which made men eager for light on the mysteries of their little world and for accurate knowledge of distant lands about which faint rumors had come to them. The mediaeval world was small, centering about the Mediterranean Sea: of regions to the west beyond the Pillars of Hercules nothing was known and little was dreamed. The fifteenth century was to be a period of growing emancipation from the fetters of tradition. The invention of printing in the first half of the century meant that books would take the place of manuscripts, laboriously copied and slowly circulated, and be scattered broadcast over Europe diffusing knowledge everywhere. Probably no other invention has meant so much for the human race as the invention of the printing press. Discoveries of one kind and another extended men's horizons. Daring seamen from Portugal and Spain were discovering new lands and new routes to old lands: Columbus found a new world and Vasco da Gama a new road to India. The Prussian astronomer Copernicus in the early years of the next century set forth the theory that bears his name, completely upsetting the old conception of the position, shape, and size of the earth.

How startling these discoveries were to an age which was accustomed to mediaeval ways of thinking, we who live in a time of scientific triumphs find it difficult to imagine. The boundaries of knowledge were enlarged as if by magic; literature was enriched and humanized; the imagination was filled with splendid visions of conquest and exploration. The stimulus thus given to the mental life of continental Europe was felt in England first at the universities, particularly at Oxford, where a group of reformers gave themselves with rare devotion to the study and teaching of Greek. The inspiration had come from Italy whither William Grocyn had gone to study under two famous classical scholars.

Grocyn returned to Oxford and began the teaching of Greek with such contagious enthusiasm that Oxford soon became famous as the center of the new learning in England. Hither came the great Erasmus from Holland to study, and here he found John Colet and Thomas More, men of vigorous minds and lofty characters who aroused the two universities from their mediaeval slumbers and profoundly influenced the general educational, social, and religious ideals of England. Even more important, however, as a radiating center of Renaissance culture was the court of Henry VIII, who encouraged literature and art and affected the splendor of Italian architecture, dress, and manners.

Followers of Chaucer.—Of genuine literary activity, however, the century after Chaucer is comparatively barren. Men's minds were too full of the stirring march of outward events to find leisure for meditation and literary expression. The few writers of the early fifteenth century were looking backward at the vanishing glories of mediaevalism. Devoted to Chaucer as their "Fader dere and maister reverent," two of these, JOHN LYDGATE and THOMAS HOCCLEVE, strove to imitate him in several long poems. Lydgate's *Story of Thebes*, based on Boccaccio and Statius, is told as if it were one of the *Canterbury Tales;* Hoccleve's *Gouvernail of Princes*, written for Henry V when Prince of Wales, is of present interest because it contains the well-known portrait of Chaucer already mentioned. Hoccleve was personally acquainted with Chaucer and sincerely attached to him as a disciple. But these two Chaucerians were lacking in originality, and they have fallen into the oblivion which sooner or later comes to imitators.

More vigorous than these was JAMES I OF SCOTLAND, author of *The Kingis Quair* (King's Book) written in the "rhyme royal." Imprisoned when a small boy by the English king, Prince James spent eighteen years in England. Here he read Chaucer and Gower; and after he returned to Scotland, remembering his English models, he turned into verse the story of his love for Lady Jane Beaufort, his future queen. Other Scotch poets, later in

of a French book, the *Historie of Troye*, the first book to be printed in English.

In 1476 Caxton returned to England and set up his printing press at Westminster within the precincts of the Abbey, where he published the next year *The Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers*, translated from the French by Lord Rivers and edited by Caxton himself. This was the first book printed in England. During the next fifteen years the Westminster printer issued numerous books, some of which were translations by himself,

CAXTON SHOWING A SPECIMEN OF HIS PRINTING TO EDWARD IV

while others were well-known English works. By printing Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, and Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, Caxton rendered a distinguished service to English literature and may justly be called the friend and promoter of letters. His own prefaces to many of the books he printed show that Caxton had a romantic vein in him as well as a refreshing sense of humor, and that he followed his vocation with the sagacity of a business man and at the same time with something of the idealism of the artist.

Malory's Morte d'Arthur.—The most interesting prose work of the fifteenth century, and one of the most delightful books in all literature, is the *Morte d'Arthur* (Death of Arthur) of Sir Thomas Malory, which Caxton printed in 1485. According to Caxton the *Morte d'Arthur* was written about 1470, but of Sir Thomas Malory we know little except that he must have been a country gentleman of an ancient Warwickshire family. Malory found his material in various French romances dealing with the Arthurian legends; and this confused material he arranged in a more orderly narrative around the great figure of King Arthur, with the quest of the Holy Grail as the unifying motive of the action. The story of King Arthur had been a favorite one, as we have seen, from the days of Geoffrey of Monmouth and Layamon, and during the Middle Ages a vast network of legends had formed around the Celtic hero and his knights. It is remarkable how coherent a narrative Malory was able to string together out of such a tangled mass of legendary lore; it is still more remarkable that he should have succeeded in making so vivid and human these shadowy figures of mediaeval romance.

ILLUSTRATION FROM MALORY'S MORTE D'ARTHUR

The *Morte d'Arthur* is more than a mosaic of adaptations: the individuality and elevation of its style, the cadence of its diction, and the imaginative splendor of its pictures, entitle it to be called a great literary creation, an enchanting prose-poem. It is the one great prose work which, looking backward at the fast receding days of feudalism, gathers up and preserves the varied pageantry of a mediaeval world with its battles and tournaments and castles. Here we find "many joyous and pleasant histories,

and noble and renowned acts of humanity, gentleness, and chivalry," to quote from Caxton, who naïvely continues: "And for to pass the time this book shall be pleasant to read in, but for to give faith and belief that all is true that is contained therein, ye be at your liberty." All the generations since have found Malory's book "pleasant to read in." To it Tennyson went for material and inspiration when he would tell the deeds of Arthur and his fellowship of knights and ladies in *The Idylls of the King*, and other poets earlier and later have done the same. It has furnished the modern mind with a greater wealth of familiar legend than any other book before the days of Elizabeth. Fortunate indeed is that young person who early makes the acquaintance of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur*, that wonderland of romance.

Prose: More, Ascham, and Tyndale.—While the great prose romance of Malory was mediaeval in tone, the spirit of the Renaissance was nevertheless manifesting itself in England in the later years of the fifteenth century; during the first half of the sixteenth century it was abroad in the land. The new prose reflected the awakened interest in social, political, educational, and religious reform by revealing a discontent with the old order and a sincere aspiration for a more enlightened society. The most accomplished of the pioneers of the English Renaissance was SIR THOMAS MORE, who has already been mentioned among the Oxford reformers. Scholar, lawyer, and statesman, More was one of the most brilliant and versatile men of his time. Although he spent much of his life in political service, he kept to its tragic close his early enthusiasm for learning and culture. Of that small band of devoted humanists who relighted the torch of learning at the English universities and kept it burning, he was the one real man of letters. More's *Utopia* (Nowhere), which appeared in 1516, is the account of an ideal commonwealth in which men are free, enlightened, and fraternal. There are no social wrongs in this imaginary island, about which a companion of Amerigo Vespucci in his travels westward is represented as telling the author: justice, common sense, desire for the general good, make life peaceful and fruitful. The *Utopia* is at once a protest against

contemporary social conditions and a dream of perfection. So concrete is the narrative, so practical seems the law of liberty and equality, that we wonder why through the centuries the growth of the spirit of human brotherhood has been so slow. Many of the social and political reforms which More suggested have of course long ago been put into practice; others still exist only in the Kingdom of Nowhere. The *Utopia* was written in Latin, but was almost immediately translated into English and other European languages and enjoyed an immense popularity. It still holds its own as one of the world's classics.

Less important than More but worthy of mention as contributing to the educational side of the Renaissance was ROGER ASCHAM, scholar and teacher, and for a time tutor of Princess Elizabeth, later queen. His *Toxophilus* (1545) is a treatise on archery, an exceedingly popular sport in the sixteenth century. Ascham discusses at length the science of archery and its importance as a manly art tending to develop sound health and a vigorous national life. His later work is *The Schoolmaster*, in which he sets forth his views on education, some of them modern enough to have been written yesterday. He believed first of all that between teacher and pupil there should exist a cordial sympathy. His insistence on outdoor sports, character-building as the aim of education, and sound classical training, shows that he was a genuine Englishman as well as a thorough humanist.

The books of More and Ascham were mainly for the aristocracy with whom in general were their sympathies. There was need, however, for a simpler, more direct prose which would appeal to the common people, as Wyclif's Bible had done a hundred and fifty years before. Since then the Reformation had become a great vitalizing movement in Germany; and now the political separation of Henry VIII (1534) from the Roman Church meant the triumph of the Reformation in England. About this time WILLIAM TYNDALE and Miles Coverdale translated the Bible into strong idiomatic English, though Tyndale had himself as early as 1525, in the face of opposition from Church and State, translated from the original Greek parts of the New Testament. This new translation by

Tyndale and Coverdale became the basis of later versions of the Scriptures and profoundly influenced English prose.

The New Poetry: Wyatt and Surrey.—The oncoming tide of the Renaissance brought still greater changes to English poetry than to prose. Since the days of Chaucer there had appeared no poets of real distinction; and Chaucer himself, it will be remembered, drew his earlier inspiration from France and Italy, but the Italian influence had proved more fruitful. And so it happens again that poetic impulse comes fresh from Italy, the land of sonnets and the home of Petrarch and Dante. The establishment of a strongly centralized dynasty after the close of the Wars of the Roses had induced a feeling of security, and England under Henry VIII was again coming in touch with the nations of the continent, particularly with the intellectual life of Italy. The Tudor king, as we have seen, was ambitious to shine as the patron of letters and art and to make his court the center of the new culture. His courtiers visited Italy and returned full of enthusiasm for her poetry. Making poems soon became an elegant accomplishment at the English court. Indeed, it may be said that every educated man tried his hand at versifying, and if his production pleased it was carefully copied and passed around among his friends.

In 1557 appeared a printed collection of these courtier-poems, known to us as *Tottel's Miscellany* because Richard Tottel was the publisher. *Tottel's Miscellany* is the first collection of miscellaneous English poems ever printed and marks the beginning of a new kind of poetry in England. The chief contributors to this volume were SIR THOMAS WYATT and HENRY HOWARD, EARL OF SURREY, accomplished men of courtly temperament and training. Wyatt, the older of the two, was sent on diplomatic missions to France, the Netherlands, and Italy. In Italy he read much of the popular amorous verse for which that country had long been famous, particularly the sonnets of Petrarch addressed to Laura, the lady of his love. Wyatt translated a few of these Petrarchian sonnets into English and then composed a number of sonnets and love lyrics more or less in the Italian fashion. He introduced into

English poetry the sonnet, that fourteen-line miniature, at once the most exacting and the most artistic of lyric forms. Surrey, Wyatt's younger contemporary, had also read widely in the poetry of Italy, having spent much time on the continent in military service. Though less original and vigorous than Wyatt, he was more polished and graceful in manners and verse and imitated Petrarch with greater ease and finish. Surrey was the first English writer to use blank verse, employing it in his translation of two books of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Surrey's blank verse is somewhat stiff and wooden, as might be expected in a pioneer effort, but it was the significant beginning of what was destined to become the favorite form of poetic expression in English literature. Wyatt and Surrey, then, brought into England the Italian sonnet and graceful love lyric, and so furnished a new form and fresh inspiration to the early Elizabethans; Surrey wrote blank verse, and was thus the precursor of Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Milton, who gave it permanence and distinction. With the publication in 1557 of *Tottel's Miscellany*, English literature again becomes a part of the broad stream of European culture, and the Renaissance will soon reach flood tide in the splendid creations of the Elizabethans.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1400-1558)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Poetry	
Chaucer's Disciples: John Lydgate (Story of Thebes), Thomas Hoccleve (Gouvernail of Princes)	Henry IV, V, VI, 1399-1461
	Batle of Agincourt, 1415
	Edward IV, V, 1461-1483
	Richard III, Henry VII, 1483-1509
Scotch Poets: James I (King's Quair), William Dunbar, Gawain Douglas	Wars of the Roses, 1455-1485
The Ballads: Chevy Chace, Robin-Hood, etc.	The Turks capture Constantinople; scholars flee to Italy with Greek manuscripts, 1453
Wyatt and Surrey: Tottel's Miscellany (1557) (Sonnet and blank verse introduced)	Invention of Printing, about 1450
	Age of Greatest Artists in Italy: Raphael, Michael Angelo, Leonardo da Vinci
II. Prose	
Malory's Morte d'Arthur (1470)	America Discovered, 1492
William Caxton, first English Printer: Dictes and Sayings of the Philosophers, first book printed in England (1477)	Henry VIII, 1509-1547
	Reformation in Germany (Luther), 1520
More's Utopia	
Ascham's Toxophilus and Schoolmaster	Act of Supremacy: Separation from the Roman Church, 1534
Tyndale's New Testament (1525)	Reigns of Edward VI, and Mary, 1547-1558

The Renaissance and the Reformation Stimulate the English Mind.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Denton's England in the Fifteenth Century, Field's An Introduction to the Study of the Renaissance, Flower's The Century of Sir Thomas More, Saintsbury's Elizabethan Literature (Macmillan), Malory's Morte d'Arthur ("Everyman's Library"), More's Utopia ("Everyman's Library"), Lanier's Boy's King Arthur (Scribner), Gummere's Old English Ballads (Ginn)

CHAPTER FIVE

THE ELIZABETHAN AGE

1558-1625

The Flood Tide of the Renaissance

The New Nationalism.—The reign of Queen Elizabeth (1558–1603) marks the beginning of the modern era in English history. It was a time of splendid vitality in the nation. All classes were for the first time united in a spirit of patriotic pride at the steady growth of England's greatness. The nation had become a world power of first rank and her people were thrilled with a new sense of strength. Increased prestige abroad, security at home, growing numbers, improved agricultural conditions, expanding commerce,—all these meant an abounding material prosperity. Old factional divisions had disappeared in the larger individual freedom and fuller national life. The religious disturbances of the reigns of Henry VIII and Mary had given place to a policy of religious toleration under Elizabeth, so that Catholics and Protestants could now work together for a common country. The wisdom of this tolerant attitude of the queen was conspicuously justified in the outcome of the famous attack of the Spanish Armada in 1588. At this critical juncture in the nation's life, when division would have meant ruin, all Englishmen regardless of religious affiliation united in support of their queen and native land. It was a magnificent object-lesson in patriotism. This memorable victory over Spain inspired the people with the confidence of youth; nothing now seemed impossible; enthusiasm ran high; the new consciousness of independence made the nation

> "strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

New Intellectual Interests.—Great as was the growth of England in material comforts and in the social contentment which comes from peace and plenty, more marvelous still was her intellectual development. Domestic security gave the nation leisure for thinking and dreaming, not idly but always constructively. A noble restlessness and an insatiable curiosity would not let men think the old thoughts, but drove them to investigation and to travel on land and sea. Hardy seamen like Drake and Gilbert set out in tiny boats on perilous voyages of discovery; courtiers like Raleigh would plant colonies and seek for Eldorados in western lands; others, like Hakluyt, fired with a passion for exploration from reading thrilling books of adventure and unable to leave England, made collections of the voyages and discoveries of noted navigators. There was no fabled strand of gold too far away for these daring Englishmen to seek; no seas too rough, no wilderness too dense, no savage tribe too fierce, to daunt their unconquerable wills. Their deeds and their still greater dreams stir the imagination to-day and make the blood flow faster in our veins.

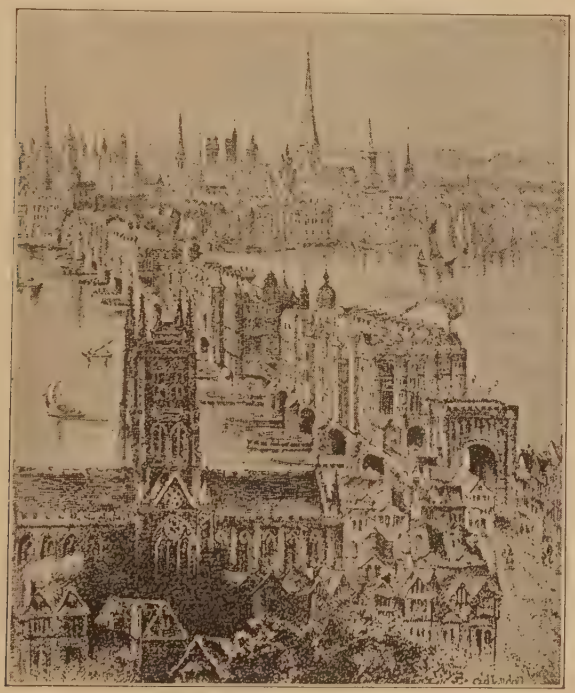
As there was no distant land toward which they did not look with longing eyes, so there was no realm of knowledge into which they did not desire to penetrate. "I have taken all knowledge to be my province," said young Francis Bacon with splendid audacity. The dream of the alchemist that he could turn all baser metals into gold is typical of the imperial imagination of these explorers into mind and matter. The mental horizons of Englishmen were enormously enlarged. Education felt the quickening impulse, and as a result free grammar schools were established throughout England in which the great middle class might have better training. The standard of national intelligence was in this way raised many degrees, for now the new classical learning was reaching the masses of the people. The creation of literature would in consequence no longer be largely confined to the nobility, but the virile middle class would furnish the new writers and multitudes of readers. The throb of a quicker life was in the nation's heart and a livelier zest for knowledge stimulated the

popular mind, for England was at last feeling the full effects of the Renaissance.

The Joy of Living.—This imperious energy showed itself still more generally in the exuberant joy and outward splendor of life. Fondness for rich dress, gorgeous trappings, elaborate spectacles, lively outdoor sports, dancing and music, magnificent pageants, gave to Elizabethan life such dash and color, such irrepressible buoyancy, as no other period of English history can lay claim to. The center of it all was the queen who, despite her faults, was the embodiment of the vital spirit of this bewildering age of action and lavish magnificence. Elizabeth was herself expert in all polite accomplishments, the inspirer of poet and musician in devising spectacular entertainments to delight the eye and ear. Her vanity, her violent temper, her frequent deviations from truth and propriety, were all forgiven in the light of her extraordinary ability by a people to whom extravagance of speech and action seemed only the natural expression of overflowing vitality. To the popular mind no doubt there was, besides, about the personality of the queen something of the glamour of romance that won their chivalric devotion. She made many triumphal progresses through her island kingdom, the guest at costly banquets, at prolonged and elaborate revels such as the entertainment given by Leicester at Kenilworth in 1575; at other times, she was the central figure in gorgeous street-processions or in a gaily decked barge leading a little fleet of pleasure boats along the "silver-streaming Thames"; at all times, wherever she moved she was the "observed of all observers," popular and yet masterful.

As was the queen so were the people: the nation as a whole reflected this royal love of show and this passionate joy of living. Youthful enthusiasm and delight in action characterized all classes: the allurement and the mystery of the unknown led the bolder spirits to seek adventure beyond the seas; but even those who stayed at home had imperial imaginations; and all in truth showed in word and deed that almost riotous enjoyment of life which healthy children and youthful nations feel. If we look

around for some typical Elizabethan, we shall find that no one man more completely incarnated the vigor, the curiosity, the daring, the courtesy, and the moral heroism of this remarkable age than the versatile and knightly Sir Walter Raleigh.



LONDON BRIDGE IN SHAKESPEARE'S TIME
On the tower gateway in the foreground may be seen the heads of criminals.

Elizabethan London.—In London all this streaming tide of life reached its highest point. London was still a walled city except on the water side along the Thames, and within these walls somewhat over a hundred thousand people lived. Without the walls were pleasant suburbs containing another hundred thousand; and of these suburbs the most important was Westminster, because

it was the seat of Parliament, while near by was Whitehall, the favorite London residence of the queen. Along the Strand from the city to Westminster were the stately mansions of the nobility. The great highway of London was the Thames, clear and shining then, crowded with boats going east and west or crossing to Southwark, where the theaters and bear gardens were. Pleasant open fields stretched along the banks only a few minutes' walk from the city, and hither came those on recreation bent. The Thames was spanned by London Bridge, a massive structure on which were shops, and from the ends and middle of which rose gloomy towers grimly decorated with the ghastly heads of criminals. Within the city proper the streets were narrow and generally dirty, badly paved and poorly lighted, and lined with rows of houses with projecting gables. In these streets moved back and forth a motley and noisy throng: the noble in his velvet, the beggar in his rags, the gaily dressed foreigner, the soberly clad Puritan, the sleek and prosperous tradesman, the fashionable gallant with his laced satin doublet and French hat, the street vendor selling his wares, the ragged impecunious poet and the hungry playwright—all these and more jostled each other in the crowded streets.

The central meeting place of London was the spacious nave of St. Paul's Cathedral. Here lawyers and business men strolled and gossiped; here you might hire servants or meet your friends or observe the newest fashions; here you might learn all the latest news from the ordinary scandals to important political appointments. St. Paul's was, in short, the great loafing place of the city, the common social and business exchange. The tavern was another social center, the club of that day. Men often dined at the taverns, remaining long over their wine, smoking or playing cards, discussing the newest book or play, and later going to the theater. The most famous of these taverns was the Mermaid in Bread Street, not far from St. Paul's, where Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and other great Elizabethans used to have many wit-combats. Of these merry meetings Beaumont the dramatist wrote the well-known lines:

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if everyone from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life!

The other great resort of London life, the theater, will be discussed a little later under the Drama.

Thus it will be seen that Elizabethan London, the heart of all that ceaseless activity and national enthusiasm, presented a fascinating spectacle of color and movement in endless variety. Into it poured a stream of foreign travel bringing England into familiar contact with the continent; to it returned sailors and travelers from the new world and the old with news of strange peoples, enchanted lands and rivers with sands of gold. For the poet and especially for the dramatist there could not have been a more stimulating environment. After this preliminary sketch of the conditions under which Elizabethan literature flourished, we may the more appreciatively study the lives and writings of the master spirits of that golden age.

I. ELIZABETHAN POETRY (NON-DRAMATIC)

Elizabethan literature falls naturally into three general divisions: (1) **Non-dramatic Poetry,** including the works of Spenser, of Sidney and the Sonneteers, and the Miscellaneous Lyrics; (2) **Dramatic Literature,** the principal form of poetic utterance in this period; and (3) **Prose,** of which there is considerable variety. While the drama is the main interest in this vital and active age, non-dramatic poetry occupies a prominent place, reflecting as it does the quieter romantic spirit and voicing the minor emotions. The earliest of the great Elizabethan poets is Edmund Spenser, with the publication of whose *Shepherd's Calendar* in 1579 Elizabethan literature may be said to begin.

EDMUND SPENSER (1552-1599)

His Life.—Not very far from the Tower of London Edmund Spenser was born in 1552. His father, though a clothmaker in London, came of a gentle

family in Lancashire. Spenser attended the Merchant Tailors' School, one of the famous grammar schools of London, where he received pecuniary aid. From this school he went to Cambridge, entering Pembroke College as a sizar,—that is, a student receiving financial aid and usually subject to certain menial duties. Spenser made an excellent record at Cambridge: he diligently studied the Latin and Greek classics as well as French and Italian, and he must have read the few available English books, especially Chaucer. He formed at least two valuable friendships, one with Edmund Kirk who later wrote an introduction to the *Shepherd's Calendar*, and the other with Gabriel Harvey, the literary critic, who a few years later introduced him to the Earl of Leicester. Of the details of Spenser's life at Cambridge, or indeed of his early life in general, we know very little. He left the University in 1576 after taking his M. A. The next two years he spent in the north of England, probably in Lancashire with relatives, during which time he wooed in vain a maiden whom he romantically names "Rosalind."

By 1578 Spenser is in London, having made the acquaintance of Sidney and other prominent courtiers, among them the Earl of Leicester. Soon after this Spenser is honored with an audience by the queen, and for the next year or two lives in the sunshine of the court, as far as his limited means will allow. In 1579 he published the *Shepherd's Calendar*, modestly signed "Immerito" and dedicated to Sir Philip Sidney, a work which was at once recognized as of a new order. In 1580 Spenser was appointed secretary to Lord Grey, the new Lord Deputy of Ireland, at the solicitation of Leicester and other courtier friends; and in that turbulent country the poet, holding various official positions, lived for the next eighteen years almost the life of an exile. Most of this time was spent at Kilcolman Castle in the county of Cork which, together with a large tract of land, had been given him as a reward for his services. Ireland was in a more or less disturbed condition, and it is certain that the poet's life there was not altogether one of "dreamful ease." Still, he found leisure for writing his great work, *The Faerie Queene*, the first three books of which he took to London in 1589 and three more in 1595, encouraged by his generous friend Walter Raleigh, who had visited him in his lonely Irish castle. The publication of *The Faerie Queene* made him famous but gained for him only a small pension from the unappreciative Burleigh, though the queen would fain have made it more. In 1594 Spenser married Elizabeth Boyle. Four years later an insurrection broke out near the poet's estate, Kilcolman Castle was pillaged and burned, and Spenser with his family barely escaped to England broken in health and hope and almost penniless. The great poet lived only a few months after his return to London, dying in January, 1599. He was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

His Personality.—Spenser is less real to us than Chaucer. The two men were essentially different not only in personality but also

in the choice and treatment of their subjects. Spenser was a "sage and serious poet," as Milton said; he lacked humor, that pervasive human quality which makes Chaucer so real through the centuries. Spenser held public office as did Chaucer, but he was not interested in the men and life about him as was the older poet whom he called master. While not without practical sagacity, Spenser was not a man of affairs: he was rather the weaver of the tapestry of dreams out of antique materials; he was always the poet. He was descended from gentle blood and his temperament was aristocratic; while Chaucer, though in the royal service and using legends of court and castle in much of his poetry, was democratic at heart and wrote with his eye on life. Furthermore, Chaucer had ardent disciples who, besides complimenting their master by literary imitation, paid him strong personal tribute in certain lines now famous. No immediate disciples continued Spenser's work, though to all later poets his verse became the fountain of ineffable beauty. His remoteness from the whirling center of Elizabethan life is no doubt another reason why we know so little of the man himself. Spenser had warm friends at court—such men as Sidney and Leicester and Raleigh—but he had neither the wealth nor the talent for affairs to become himself a successful courtier. He had indeed sued for court favor until he was weary and heartsick, only to be sent back to his provincial retreat among a people he did not like, to dream his mystic dreams and spin his silken web of allegory. Perhaps it was just as well: in London it was the day of the dramatic poet, and Spenser did not have the dramatic temperament, was not a lover of action or a keen observer of men; dwelling apart in Celtic Ireland he could best create his shining world of enchantment called *The Fairie Queene.*

His Works.—The supreme work of Spenser is *The Faerie Queene,* an allegorical poem in six books with the fragment of a seventh. The original plan of the poem contemplated twenty-four books, twelve devoted to the twelve private virtues and twelve to an equal number of public or political virtues. While this was the vast design of the author, a splendid dream which he could hardly

hope to realize, he did actually set himself the task of writing twelve books. These twelve books were to set forth the twelve qualities or virtues of ideal knighthood, each virtue being represented by a knight who should wage war against certain vices. In the end, when the knights had gained the victory by the help of that pattern of perfect knighthood, Prince Arthur, the marriage of Arthur with Gloriana, the Fairie Queene, was to be celebrated.

As a matter of fact, however, only six books, each containing twelve cantos, were completed. In the first book are related the adventures of the Red Cross Knight, representing Holiness; in the second those of Sir Guyon, or Temperance; in the third those of Britomarte, or Chastity; in the fourth those of Cambel and Triamond, or Friendship; in the fifth, those of Sir Artegall, or Justice; and in the sixth those of Sir Calidore, or Courtesy. These knights, we are told in Spenser's introductory letter to the poem, are sent forth on their several quests by Gloriana, Queen of Fairyland, who is holding a festival lasting twelve days. Each day some one comes to the court telling of beauty or virtue in distress and pleading for a champion to go to the relief of the oppressed. In response to these requests the knights set out to fight with dragons, witches, giants, and other powers of evil. The poem gives in detail the story of these adventures, sometimes clearly, sometimes obscurely, so interrupted here and there by episodes and complicated by political and religious allegory veiling historical characters, that one may easily get confused and lose the thread of the narrative. Throughout the adventures Prince Arthur now and again appears in his search for the Faerie Queene. It is all a bewildering wonderland of gorgeous dreams in mellifluous verse.

The professed purpose of *The Faerie Queene* is moral in the larger sense of shadowing forth the eternal conflict between sense and soul, good and evil, right and wrong; more directly, it is to "fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline," as Spenser explains in his introductory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh. The poem is on the one hand a great moral allegory depicting the

varied struggles between preëminent Virtues, impersonated after the mediaeval fashion by valorous knights, and deadly Vices in the guise of dwarfs, magicians, enchantresses, and giants; and on the other, a social and political allegory reflecting actual persons and contemporary events. Gloriana, the Faerie Queene, stands for Queen Elizabeth; the false Duessa is Mary, Queen of Scots, Elizabeth's rival; Prince Arthur is Lord Leicester; other characters represent Sir Philip Sidney, Lord Grey of Wilton, Sir Walter Raleigh, and many more. Moreover, the conflict between England and Spain, Protestantism and Catholicism, and in general the growing majesty of the nation at home and abroad are symbolized in this leisurely pageant. "In that Faery Queene," says Spenser, "I meane glory in my generall intention, but in my particular I conceive the most excellent and glorious person of our soveraine the Queene, and her kingdome in Faery land."

The first three books of *The Faerie Queene* are the best, and for most readers the first book will suffice to give a good idea of the nature of the poem and its exquisite music. After the first three books the interest is likely to lag in the confused labyrinth of allegory. Indeed, it is best not to attempt to unravel the tangled web of subtle allusion, but to read on forgetful of all but the magic of the poetry itself.

The Spenserian Stanza.—*The Faerie Queene* is written in a new kind of verse form which came to be known as the "Spenserian stanza." Spenser changed the *ottava rima* (eight-line rhyme) of the Italian poet Ariosto into a nine-line stanza, the first eight lines having five feet each and the ninth line six feet—and the whole rhyming *ababbcbcc*. The last line, called an Alexandrine, gives a peculiarly lingering, musical effect to the stanza. The Spenserian stanza proved very popular with succeeding poets: during the nineteenth century Keats, Shelley, Byron, and Tennyson used it with happy effect. The following stanzas taken at random from the first book of *The Faerie Queene* will serve to illustrate the form of Spenser's verse as well as the languorous rhythm of his lines:

A little lowly Hermitage it was,
Down in a dale, hard by a forest's side,
Far from resort of people, that did pas
In travell to and froe: a little wyde[1]
There was an holy chappell edifyde,[2]
Wherein the Hermite dewly wont to say
His holy things each morne and eventyde:
Thereby a Christall streame did gently play,
Which from a sacred fountaine welled forth alway.

The drouping Night thus creepeth on them fast,
And the sad humour[3] loading their eye liddes,
As messenger of Morpheus on them cast
Sweet slombring deaw, the which to sleepe them biddes.
Unto their lodgings then his guestes he riddes:[4]
Where when all drowned in deadly sleepe he findes,
He to his study goes, and there amiddes
His Magick bookes and artes of sundry kindes,
He seekes out mighty charmes, to trouble sleepy mindes.

The Minor Poems: Shepherd's Calendar, Sonnets, Marriage-Hymns.—When in 1579 the *Shepherd's Calendar* appeared, it was evident that England had at last another original poet; and yet in this work Spenser was experimenting, feeling his way towards a more adequate method and a worthier theme. The poem is a series of twelve eclogues or pastorals, one for each month in the year. The characters are shepherds and shepherdesses who discourse on love and rural life after the artificial fashion in Renaissance imitations of ancient pastoral poetry. Spenser varies the conventional order, however, by introducing a satire on the clergy, a lament on his own hopeless wooing of "Rosalind," an allegory, and a tribute to Queen Elizabeth. Moreover, he uses various meters and sprinkles the verse pretty liberally with archaic words in order to give the conversations a rustic flavor. The publication of the *Shepherd's Calendar* is a significant incident in English literature: in the first place it marks the beginning of the great outburst of Elizabethan poetry; and in the second place, it brought into our literature the pastoral form which the Elizabethans were soon to use so extensively in the drama.

1 distant. 2 built. 3 moisture. 4 dismisses.

Among the other minor poems the most noteworthy are the *Amoretti*, a series of sonnets, and two marriage-hymns, the "Prothalamium" and the "Epithalamium." The *Amoretti*, or love sonnets, celebrate Spenser's courtship of Elizabeth Boyle; the "Prothalamium" is in honor of the approaching double wedding of the Ladies Elizabeth and Catherine Somerset, while the "Epithalamium" celebrates Spenser's own marriage. These two wedding-hymns are among the noblest poems in all literature; the "Epithalamium" in particular is a burst of glorious music from the poet's heart. Besides these lyrics of love and marriage, Spenser wrote a satire on society in general called "Mother Hubbard's Tale," another pastoral, "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," and several hymns to love and beauty after the manner of Petrarch. In several of these minor poems there is a melancholy strain which reveals the weariness and disillusion of the poet, who had put his trust in princes only to be rewarded with indifference or positive neglect.

Spenser's Contribution.—Spenser wrote under the spell of the Italian Renaissance. Out of the shining materials of mediaeval chivalry he made the framework of his great allegory, but the inner beauty and moral elevation of it adequately reflect the spirit of the Renaissance and Reformation. Spenser is above all else the poet of pure Beauty. In his magic mirror we may perceive the vague outlines of real persons and events, but Spenser did not write with his eyes on reality. Like the Lady of Shalott he weaves "a magic web with colors gay," and in his mirror as in hers "shadows of the world appear." Beauty and Melody and Imaginative Splendor—these are the three chief qualities of Spenser's poetry. The melody of his verse is due in part to the frequent use of obsolete words with full vowel and liquid sounds, such as *eyne* (eyes), *eftsoones* (forthwith) *fone* (foes), *whylome* (formerly), *yborne* (born). His *Faerie Queene*, like Prospero's enchanted island, is "full of sounds and sweet airs that give delight and hurt not."

These qualities, together with the stanza form of his invention, have so strongly appealed to later poets that Spenser is called

"the poets' poet." Indeed, to all sensitive lovers of ethereal beauty and to those who delight in allegories and symbols, Spenser's poetry is a land of enchantment. Yet to the modern reader allegory of itself makes little appeal; and while the essential charm of Spenser's poetry does not lie in the allegory, there are not many persons who have either the sense for delicate beauty or the patience to read the six books of *The Faerie Queene*, so unreal does the world of Spenser seem. Unrelieved either by humor or dramatic action, it is in strange contrast with the productions of the buoyant, red-blooded playwrights who were soon to make the Elizabethan welkin ring. But in this serene and mystic masterpiece of Spenser all should read, much or little, as their temperaments incline them, and so help to keep alive in their own souls the ideal of perfect Beauty.

THE LESSER POETS

Sidney and the Sonneteers.—The life of Sir Philip Sidney is more interesting than anything he wrote, for no other Elizabethan courtier, not even Raleigh, is so perfect an embodiment of the national and personal ideals of the time. Sidney's high social position, his charming personality, and above all his heroic death on the field of Zutphen, fighting for his country, have invested his name with romantic interest. Of noble family, nephew to Elizabeth's favorite, the Earl of Leicester, he was educated at Oxford, traveled in France, Italy, Germany, and Austria, was later sent on diplomatic missions to the continent, lived at court and cultivated literature, was friend of Spenser, married Frances Walsingham, wrote poetry and romance, and died at thirty-two on the battlefield. This is a summary of Sidney's brief career. His writings were not published until after his death, though they were freely circulated before that in manuscript among his friends, according to the custom of the day.

Sidney's literary fame rests upon three works: *Arcadia*, a pastoral prose romance set in a landscape of idyllic charm where courtiers, in the guise of shepherds and shepherdesses, talk in stilted language abounding in poetic "conceits"; *Defence of Poesie*,

a critical prose essay defending English poetry and even expressing admiration for native ballads such as "Chevy Chace," which, he declares, always moved his heart "more than a trumpet"; and *Astrophel and Stella*, a series of sonnets addressed to the Lady Penelope Devereux. While in his own generation the *Arcadia* was the most popular of these, and along with Lyly's *Euphues* made fashionable an artificial sort of prose known later as "Euphuistic," the *Astrophel and Stella* is Sidney's most abiding contribution. In memory of his early love for Penelope Devereux, whom fate had given to another, he obeyed the command of his Muse, "Look in thy heart and write." Astrophel (star-lover) is Sidney and Stella (star) is Penelope, daughter of the Earl of Essex, Lady Rich. *Astrophel and Stella*, though as a whole more or less imitative of French and Italian sonnets, contains some exquisite poems which are no doubt personal in sentiment. Sidney is, indeed, the first to give distinction to the sonnet in our literature.

Contemporary with Sidney and immediately following him, there began and flourished a mighty vogue of sonnet writing. Thousands of sonnets were written in the two decades from 1580 to 1600, usually arranged in series and addressed to some real or imaginary mistress, as were the Italian Petrarch's to Laura. Thus, we have sonnet books by Daniel, Constable, Lodge, Barnes, Drayton, and other poetasters, addressed to Delia, Diana, Phillis, Idea, Coelia, Chloris, Diella, Fidessa, Zepheria, and other imaginary mistresses. Perhaps the vast majority of these sonnets are purely imitative and conventional; occasionally, however, we find sonnets which evidently reflect genuine personal emotion. It must not be forgotten, though, that at this time sonneteering was a fashion, almost a rage, and that all poets, lesser and greater, tried their hands at the popular form. Sidney, Spenser, and Shakespeare stand out to-day as the most accomplished and the most genuine of the makers of the Elizabethan sonnet.[1]

[1] The Elizabethans usually broke up the Petrarchan sonnet of octave and sextet (eight and six-line divisions) into three quatrains and a rhyming couplet, of which the Shakespearean sonnet is the best representative: ababcdcdefefgg.

Sackville and Gascoigne.—Among the earlier Elizabethan poets Thomas Sackville (1536–1608) and George Gascoigne deserve mention because of their influence in a period of transition. Sackville conceived the plan of a great poem after the order of Lydgate's *Fall of Princes*, called *The Mirror for Magistrates*, to which various authors were to contribute and into which contemporary rulers might look and take warning from old examples. Sackville completed the "Induction," or general preface, to the work and the "Complaint of the Duke of Buckingham," wherein the ghost of the Duke recounts the story of his fall. About this time Sackville went into politics and the *Mirror for Magistrates* received no further contributions from him. What he did write is fresh and vigorous, giving promise of still more notable achievement. Later, Sackville in collaboration with Norton wrote *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, the first English tragedy, which will be discussed under the Drama. George Gascoigne, a clever and versatile genius, wrote *The Steel Glass*, the first verse satire in our literature. This work bears some resemblance to More's *Utopia* in that it contrasts conditions in an ideal state with the vices and follies of the time. Gascoigne also wrote the first English prose comedy, *The Supposes*, an adaptation of a play of Ariosto.

Drayton and Chapman.—Two later Elizabethan poets are Michael Drayton and George Chapman: indeed, so laborious and learned is much of their verse that they may be classed with writers of the succeeding age. Drayton (1563–1631) wrote *Polyolbion*, a lengthy metrical account of the geography of Britain—the mountains, rivers, lakes, cities, and the local legends, a work of greater antiquarian than poetic interest. His "Battle of Agincourt" is a spirited patriotic ballad with a fine swing, the meter of which Tennyson adopted in his "Charge of the Light Brigade." Chapman translated Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* into a long swinging measure which is more pleasing to the ear than the later and better known translation of Pope. This is the first of many famous attempts to render into English verse

the greatest of ancient epics. Chapman completed *Hero and Leander*, the unfinished poem of Marlowe; but he wrote, besides, a number of plays, and so belongs among the dramatic poets.

Miscellaneous Lyrics.—Numerous collections of lyric poems by various authors appeared in England during the latter half of the sixteenth century. Sometimes an enterprising bookseller would publish a collection of songs already popular but scattered through plays or other long works; sometimes a literary editor would undertake to bring these occasional lyrics together in one volume. Such a volume was called a "Miscellany." The first of these collections was of course *Tottel's Miscellany*, already considered; others followed in rapid succession, such as *The Paradise of Dainty Devices*, *A Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions*, *A Handful of Pleasant Delites*, and *England's Helicon*. Of these *England's Helicon* is the richest compendium of Elizabethan pastorals and love poems, containing verses from Spenser, Sidney, Watson, Greene, Lodge, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and others. These collections were enormously popular, for they brought within reach of every lover of song the most exquisite lyric utterances of the best poets of the day.

No other age has been enlivened and thrilled with such a burst of melody; enriched by such extensive cycles of fugitive lyrics, England became in truth "a nest of singing birds." Many of these songs are found imbedded in plays, intended as a relief to the dramatic dialogue, for they were set to music and actually sung. There is an almost infinite variety of mood and theme, from lullabies and serenades to the greater magic of Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love," and Ben Jonson's "Drink to me only with thine eyes," and Shakespeare's "Hark, hark! the lark," "Under the greenwood tree," and "Full fathom five thy father lies." One of the sweetest minor singers of those tuneful days is Thomas Campion, whose name has all but perished from the memory. His loveliest lyric, "Cherry-Ripe," reveals the light gracefulness of the Elizabethan song:

There is a garden in her face
  Where roses and white lilies grow;
A heavenly paradise is that place,
  Wherein all pleasant fruits do flow;
There cherries grow that none may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Those cherries fairly do enclose
  Of orient pearl a double row,
Which when her lovely laughter shows,
  They look like rose-buds fill'd with snow:
Yet them no peer nor prince may buy,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry.

Her eyes like angels watch them still;
  Her brows like bended bows do stand,
Threat'ning with piercing frowns to kill
  All that attempt with eye or hand
Those sacred cherries to come nigh,
Till "Cherry-Ripe" themselves do cry!

II. THE DRAMA

THE PRE-ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The Religious Beginnings.—The Elizabethan Drama was not simply an outburst of artistic energy in an age of boundless activity; it was at the same time the outgrowth of centuries of popular interest in plays and spectacles of one sort and another. The Normans were fond of shows and splendid pageantry, secular and religious, and they early stimulated in the people a desire for dramatic spectacle. It was in the Church, however, that this love of dramatic ceremonial found its most effective expression. The priests perceiving the need of a more concrete and pictorial form of religious instruction for the ignorant masses, arranged in the chancel on certain important festivals of the Church a scenic representation of the sacred event celebrated. On Good Friday, for instance, a crucifix would be buried in some improvised tomb, and on Easter morning, after the image had been secretly removed, celebration would be held around the empty tomb. Such scenes as this would in the course of time be made more

realistic by the addition of elaborate music and extended dialogue. The angels and the women at the sepulcher, the responsive chanting, the procession of priests in their showy vestments, the decorated church, and the motley crowd looking on in breathless interest—all this was decidedly dramatic. The simple dialogue, at first sung responsively and later on spoken by the priests, was this:

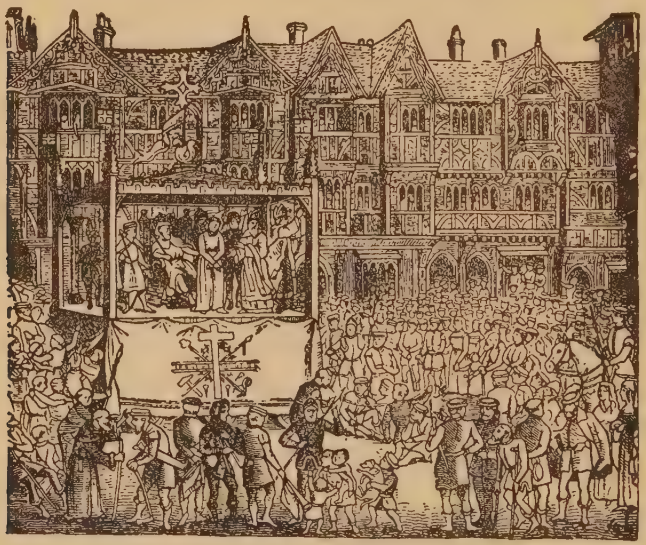
[1] Quem quaeritis in sepulchro, o Christicolae?
Jesum Nazarenum crucifixum, o caelicolae.
Non est hic, surrexit sicut praedixerat.
Ite, nuntiate quia surrexit de sepulchro!

This dialogue between the angels and the women at the sepulcher became a part of the liturgy, or services of the Church, and was later enlarged into what might be called a one-act play in celebration of Easter. Gradually other ceremonies developed in connection with the Easter and Christmas celebrations, out of which grew little sacred plays. By the middle of the thirteenth century this liturgical or church drama was fully developed. During the next hundred years English was gradually substituted for Latin, as the play lost its strictly ecclesiastical character; the performance passed from the church to the churchyard, and then to the market place or public square. By this time the plays had so developed as to cover a wide range of Biblical subjects.

Miracle Plays.—In England these dramatized Bible stories were called "miracle plays"; in France dramatized saints' legends were known as "miracle plays," while those based on Bible incidents were called "mystery plays." This distinction, however, was not recognised in England, the term "miracle play" including all kinds of religious drama. The first miracle play in England of which we have any account was given at the monastery school at Dunstable in honor of St. Catherine (*Ludus de Sancta Katharina*) about 1110. The growing popularity of the miracle plays and the more elaborate staging necessary for the interpretation

[1] Whom seek ye in the sepulcher, O Christians?
Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified, O Heavenly ones.
He is not here; he is risen as he foretold.
Go and make known that he has risen from the sepulcher.

of newer themes caused the drama to pass from the control of the Church to that of guilds, or trades-unions. Isolated plays were joined together into a dramatic cycle setting forth striking incidents in Biblical history from the creation to the judgment day. Each guild undertook to equip and present one play, meeting all expenses and providing the actors, who were now of course from the laity. There was often peculiar fitness in the



A MIRACLE PLAY AT COVENTRY
From an old print

assignment of plays among the guilds: *Noah's Flood* was presented by the guild of water merchants, the *Building of the Ark* by the shipwrights, *Abraham and Isaac* by the butchers' guild, and the *Adoration of the Wise Men* by the goldsmiths.

The proper presentation of a cycle of plays would require an entire day or even several days. The favorite time was during the great church festival of Corpus Christi in early summer when weather conditions were likely to be favorable. The plays were usually acted on floats, or "pageants" as they were called, drawn

from one show-place to another by apprentices of the various guilds, though sometimes a fixed platform in a central place was used instead of a movable stage. A huge box mounted on four wheels was divided into two compartments, the upper story being the stage and the lower the dressing room. Early in the morning of the day of presentation a procession of these pageants, or play cars, entered the town preceded by heralds announcing them. The first car stops at a given station before a motley mediaeval crowd, some standing, others seated on a temporary scaffolding; the curtains at the sides and front of the box are drawn and the play begins. When the performance is over the pageant moves on to the next station; others follow, and so on until the whole cycle has passed.

Among the conventional stage properties were the following: a throne, a pavilion representing heaven, trapdoors, and an immense dragon-mouth, representing hell, belching forth flame and smoke into which the Devil—a character with hairy body, hideous masked face, fiery red beard, horns and forked tail—pitched lost souls dressed in yellow and black typifying the flames and darkness of the infernal regions. The costumes were sometimes costly and elaborate, but for the most part were those of the time, for early actors were not troubled by anachronisms whether in story or costume. Humorous elements are to be found even in the earlier miracle plays, while in the later the comic element is conspicuous, sometimes degenerating into broad farce. In *The Deluge* Noah's shrewish wife flatly declines to go into the Ark and has to be put in by main force; the sheep-stealing episode in the *Second Shepherd's Play* is excellent comedy; Herod, a favorite character in the plays along with the Devil, was much given to violent raging on the stage and among the crowd, whence Hamlet's allusion about "out-Heroding Herod." Now and then there is a note of genuine pathos, as, for example, in the play of *Abraham and Isaac* when the little boy pleads for his life. This and several other plays possess real literary merit.

Four great cycles of miracle plays have come down to us, containing in all about one hundred and forty plays: the York Cycle,

the Chester Cycle, the Coventry Cycle, and the Towneley Cycle—the first three named for the towns where they were played and the last for the family that owned the collection. Of these the York Cycle of forty-eight plays is the largest. Many plays are lost. The wide popularity of the miracle plays is proved by the fact that they were given in as many as one hundred and twenty English towns and villages. They were most popular during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries; from 1550 performances were infrequent, and by the close of Elizabeth's reign (1603) they had ceased. The famous Passion Play of Oberammergau, in Bavaria, still reminds us of the widespread interest in religious plays five or six hundred years ago.

Morality Plays.—Along with the miracle plays there grew into popular favor an allegorical species of drama called the Morality. The purpose of the Miracle Play, as we have seen, was concrete religious instruction in Bible story through the presentation in a realistic way of scenes and characters from the Scriptures. The method was simple and direct, concerning itself merely with the subject matter; there was no attempt to enforce a lesson. The purpose of the Morality Play, on the other hand, was ethical instruction; it undertook to supplement the Miracle Play by applying religious teaching to the conduct of life. The Miracle Play sought to confirm faith, while the Morality Play sought to strengthen virtue. In order to do this, the Morality Play represented the conflict between good and evil in the soul of man by means of personified abstractions, such as the World, the Flesh, Mercy, Justice, Covetousness, Hypocrisy, Pity, Beauty, Knowledge. The early moralities dealt in a general way with the whole scope of human life and its interests. The most striking of these is *Everyman*, which has of late years been presented with telling effect. "Everyman" stands for the typical human being on his long journey towards Death. On the road he is deserted by Kindred and Wealth, and finally by Beauty, Strength, and Five Senses; but at the end Good Deeds, long neglected and almost forgotten, is revived through Knowledge and accompanies Everyman to the grave.

Morality plays became more and more concrete, finally introducing historical characters thinly veiled and dealing with matters of contemporary interest in Church and State. Thus the later morality grew into a social and political satire and out of that into a form of chronicle play, like Bale's *King Johan*, which is a prototype of the later historical plays, such as Shakespeare's *King John* and the rest. The morality is not to be thought of as the successor of the miracle play, but rather as representing another phase of dramatic development. Among the characters in the later moralities an important one was the Vice. Dressed as a court fool, or jester, and carrying a wooden sword the Vice amused the crowd by beating and otherwise worrying the Devil, only to be carried off at last on the Devil's back howling into hell-mouth. The Vice survives in the fool of Shakespeare's plays.

Interludes.—The comic relief episode of the miracle and morality plays developed at last into an independent form, the Interlude, a short performance in demand at social entertainments and at banquets. The purpose of the interlude was simply to amuse. The name is usually explained as a play (*ludus*) between (*inter*) courses at a banquet, but recent scholarship inclines to make it mean a play, or dialogue, between two persons. However that may be, the interlude was an exceedingly popular diversion at entertainments because of its realistic and farcical nature. It was an amusing skit, a little farce, a miniature comedy; indeed, we find in the interlude the conditions out of which regular comedy soon developed. The most famous interludes are those of JOHN HEYWOOD (1497–1577), a musician, poet and wit of the court of Henry VIII and of Mary. Heywood's best interlude is the *Four P's*. A Pardoner, a Palmer, a Pedlar, and a 'Poticary engage in a wit contest, each trying to outdo the other in boasting of the merits of his own vocation. In the end it is a contest as to which can tell the greatest lie; the prize is awarded to the Palmer who declares that in all his travels he never saw a woman out of patience. Heywood's interludes are social satires, but so great is their human quality, their low-comedy humor, that in reading

them one is often reminded of Chaucer. They represent a distinct advance towards genuine Elizabethan Comedy.

Folk Plays.—Closely akin to the interlude, which dealt with the near and familiar, was the strictly native drama connected with Christmas, May Day and other holiday festivals. Among these popular amusements were the "Robin Hood Plays" celebrating the merry adventures in Sherwood Forest of Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Maid Marian. These were of course the Robin Hood ballads put into dramatic form with such variations as the occasion demanded. Equally popular were the "St. George Plays," in honor of England's patron saint, presented at Christmas and known as "mummings,"—that is, plays in which masked revellers (mummers) took part. The stock characters in the mummings were Old Father Christmas, St. George, the Dragon, Old King Cole, the Merry Andrew, and the Morris Men. The Morris Dance was a favorite among the country folk and along with mummings is still kept up in remoter parts of the British Isles.[1] All these native secular elements tended to make the drama more truly an expression of the national spirit. In the first quarter of the sixteenth century the term "Masque" began to be applied to elaborate court shows, becoming later an important spectacular element in the Elizabethan Drama. About the middle of this century the classical influence helped to fix definitely the dramatic form.

The Classical Influence.—The native drama in its development from the miracle and the morality plays on through the interludes was lacking in definiteness of structure. There was vitality without artistic restraint. The widespread interest in the Latin and Greek classics following the Renaissance proved just at this stage exceedingly helpful to the English drama. During the first half of the sixteenth century it became the fashion at the great public schools of England, such as St. Paul's, Westminster, and Eton, as well as at the universities, to present

[1] For an exceedingly interesting account of these old folk-plays the student is referred to Thomas Hardy's novel, *The Return of the Native.*

in Latin the comedies of Plautus and Terence and the tragedies of Seneca, with the students as actors. Indeed, even in the grammar schools the boys acted these plays either in Latin or in translations. A little later the classic dramatists through translations became public property, Plautus being the favorite in comedy and Seneca in tragedy. Moreover, the Roman dramatists were popular in court circles and this, by reinforcing the academic liking for classic plays, helped to set the standard. Not only were comedy and tragedy proper affected by the Latin drama, but likewise the chronicle or history play, an early example of which just emerging from the morality, Bale's *King John*, has already been mentioned. Certain long rhetorical speeches in the historical plays of Shakespeare, for instance, show the lingering influences of Seneca.

The Latin plays were divided into acts and scenes; they observed more or less closely the three unities of time, place, and subject, according to which the action should be confined to a single day, a single place, and one central theme; they were compact in structure and limited in scope. The English drama, however, sought to reflect not simply one section of life in a play but the whole, and accordingly it did not at its best observe the unities. In the classic drama, furthermore, a sharp distinction is made between comedy and tragedy, whereas in the English, laughter and tears alternate in a single play as they do in real life. What the Elizabethans did gain from the imitation and translation of classic plays was a sense for form and dramatic technique which they could have acquired nowhere else; and henceforth the classical five-act division with clearly marked scenic subdivisions was to prevail in the English drama.

First Regular Comedy and Tragedy.—The first regular comedy in English is *Ralph Roister Doister*, by NICHOLAS UDALL, headmaster of Westminster, about 1553. This play is a clever adaptation of a comedy of Plautus and was written for acting by schoolboys. It is divided into acts and scenes and is in verse; the movement is rapid and the plot well constructed, though too artificial to be true to English life. About 1562 appeared another comedy,

Gammer Gurton's Needle, by WILLIAM STEVENSON, which, while loosely following Latin models, is a genuine piece of domestic realism, reflecting with graphic and coarse humor the very spirit of rustic English life. Gammer Gurton is patching her man Hodge's leather breeches when the cat jumps into the milk pan. The old woman leaves her sewing to run after the cat. Meanwhile her needle is lost; in distress she calls in the neighbors to help find it; the plot thickens; the whole village is turned upside down; there is crimination and recrimination; fights follow, and all parties are dragged before the justice. Just then Hodge discovers the needle sticking in his leather breeches, and the play ends in boisterous merriment. A stanza or two from a drinking song in the play will give some idea of its English atmosphere, for *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is really an interlude in classic form:

I cannot eate but lytle meate,
My stomacke is not good;
But sure I thinke that I can drinke
With him that weares a hood.
Thoughe I go bare, take ye no care,
I am nothinge a colde;
I stuffe my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

I love no rost but a nut browne toste[1]
And a crab layde in the fyre.
A lytle bread shall do me stead:
Much bread I not desire.
No froste nor snow, no winde, I trowe,
Can hurte mee if I wolde;
I am so wrapt, and throwly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.

The first English tragedy, *Gorboduc*, or *Ferrex and Porrex*, written by Sackville and Norton about 1562, was in imitation of the tragedies of Seneca. The subject is taken from British legend and somewhat resembles the story of *King Lear* used by Shakespeare. *Gorboduc* is a stately tragedy, having little action,

[1] A roasted crab-apple was sometimes put into a bowl of ale to give it flavor and take off the chill.

a chorus, and long rhetorical speeches—characteristics of the Senecan drama. It is especially noteworthy that this first English tragedy is written in blank verse, the poetic form which Marlowe and his successors were to use with such splendid effect.

THE ELIZABETHAN DRAMA

The fifty or sixty years from about 1580 are the most fruitful in the history of dramatic literature. Within these three score years the Elizabethan Drama rapidly developed from somewhat crude beginnings, flourished for two or three decades with unexampled splendor, and then slowly waned. The Renaissance reached its flood tide in the great Elizabethan dramatists. The central figure among these, but not independent of them, is of course William Shakespeare. He developed along with the other dramatists, using the same methods and the same common stock of material under the same general conditions.

Properly to understand the Elizabethan Drama we must bear in mind, first, that many of the play-writers had practical experience as actors, and constructed their plays with a definite audience in mind; second, that these writers served a severe apprenticeship by first revising or actually making over old plays; and third, that dramatists frequently worked together in shaping into plays a common fund of old stories. All three kinds of experience Shakespeare himself undoubtedly had. It is highly important, therefore, to remember that from the very first the writers of regular plays shaped their work directly for the stage. Schoolmasters adapted classic plays for boy actors, young university graduates like Lyly wrote plays on classic myths for the companies of choir boys who acted before the court in the royal chapels; dramatic trainers called "Masters of the Revels" prepared spectacular entertainments, or Masques, for the court or worked over Italian comedies and popular English farces. Out of all this dramatic experimenting came definite results when a number of men appeared, each with sufficient constructive genius to develop more or less artistically into a play certain phases of life and

thought. This group of dramatists immediately prepared the way for Shakespeare and his contemporaries.

Shakespeare's Immediate Predecessors.—These men were George Peele, Robert Greene, John Lyly, Thomas Kyd, Christopher Marlowe, besides several others who are of less importance than these five. Peele's plays are rather crude, though marked by passages of rare sweetness and by a strain of subtle humor. His best plays are *David and Bethsabe* and *The Old Wives' Tale*, the latter a kind of dramatized fairy tale of considerable charm. The sweetness and luxuriance of Peele's blank verse are seen in these lines from *David and Bethsabe:*

> Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
> And brings my longings tangled in her hair.
> To joy her love I'll build a kingly bower,
> Seated in hearing of a hundred streams.

Greene's best plays are *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* and *James IV:* the first a medley of mediaeval legends and the delightful love-story of an English prince and a country maiden; and the second a romantic treatment of Scottish history. This last play has a coherent, well-developed plot, showing an unusual sense for dramatic technique. Greene's women are prototypes of Shakespeare's heroines who suffer persecution—Desdemona, Imogen, Hermione; his men and women are thoroughly English, loving and cherishing national traditions. Of greater importance, however, than either Peele or Greene are Lyly and Kyd.

JOHN LYLY (1554–1606) is known to-day as the writer of an affected kind of prose style to which the name "euphuism"[1] has been given because it is used in his prose romance *Euphues* (1579). Besides this, Lyly wrote eight court comedies, the best one of which is *Endymion*, an allegorical treatment in dramatic form of the classic myth about the awakening of the sleeping youth by

[1] Euphuism is an artificial form of speech in which antithesis, alliteration, elaborate conceits, and fantastic similes drawn from natural history, abound. Shakespeare imitated this affected style in *Love's Labor's Lost*, and here and there in other plays; *e. g.*, I Henry IV, ii, 4, and *Hamlet V*, 2 (Osric's speeches).

the kiss of the moon goddess. Lyly's plays were written for a cultivated court circle and accordingly show more refinement than other comedies of the time, depending for their interest on skilful phrasing, verbal fencing, graceful allusion, antithesis, similes, and subtle conceits. He refined comedy by making it aesthetic and intellectual. Lyly's plots are highly artificial, but they have unity and artistic form; they are expressed in prose of delicacy and distinction, such as we find in the witty word-fencing of Shakespeare's *Much Ado About Nothing.* Lyly was the first writer of high prose comedy in English literature, and to him Ben Jonson's comedy of manners and Shakespeare's romantic comedy owe something; for Lyly's plays are refined transcripts of court manners and court talk.

THOMAS KYD (1558–1595) wrote one famous play, *The Spanish Tragedy,* belonging to the "tragedy of blood," or that species of Elizabethan tragedy in which the motives are murder and revenge. *The Spanish Tragedy,* immensely popular in its day, was the forerunner of many blood-and-thunder plays, such as *Titus Andronicus,* for example; it shows the influence of the tragedies of Seneca the Latin dramatist, though it is far more complex and romantic. Kyd's play bears some resemblance to *Hamlet:* indeed, the device of the play within the play, the presence of the ghost, and the nature of the story, along with evidence too technical to be considered here, give probability to the theory that Kyd was author of an earlier *Hamlet,* now lost. At all events, it is certain that Kyd greatly influenced succeeding dramatists, and that his *Spanish Tragedy* and Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* introduced a new and powerful type of romantic tragedy. Of all the predecessors of Shakespeare, however, Christopher Marlowe best deserves extended consideration.

CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE (1564-1593)

His Life.—Of the details of Marlowe's life very little is known; this is true, indeed, of most of the earlier Elizabethan dramatists. Christopher Marlowe, son of a poor shoemaker, was born in the old cathedral town of Canterbury in 1564, two months before Shakespeare. After studying at the

King's School in his native town he entered Benet College (now Corpus Christi College), Cambridge University, where he spent several years, devoting his attention mainly to the classics. After taking his degree, Marlowe went to London and joined the Lord Admiral's company of players, a rival company of the Lord Chamberlain's to which Shakespeare was attached. Here he spent the remaining years of his short life, one among that somewhat riotous Bohemian society of actors and playwrights whose lively activities centered about the theaters on the Bankside. In 1587 appeared Marlowe's first play, *Tamburlaine;* others followed in fairly rapid succession. It was evident that at last a bold and original genius had spoken out. Then of course jealousies arose; Marlowe was branded as a heretic; his enemies nagged him. Meanwhile, he enjoyed the patronage of great courtiers who recognized his remarkable gifts. Violent, no doubt, his temperament was; besides, the virtue of self-restraint was hardly to be expected amid the storm and stress of his surroundings. At the age of twenty-nine Marlowe was fatally stabbed in a tavern brawl at the village of Deptford, near London.

BIRTHPLACE OF MARLOWE
Canterbury

His Plays.—Within a period of five years Marlowe wrote half a dozen plays besides two sections of a poem called *Hero and Leander.* Four of these plays have made secure his fame as the first great Elizabethan dramatist. The earliest of them is *Tamburlaine the Great,* in two parts of five acts each. Tamburlaine was a Scythian shepherd who by his marvelous conquests became a mighty monarch, spreading terror over the earth as he rode in barbaric triumph in chariots drawn by vanquished kings. The play has an epic largeness: the language is often extravagant and bombastic, while the poetic imagery is at times a riot of sound and color. There is youthful exuberance with splendid passion and daring aspiration in these famous lines which voice the intellectual ambitions of Elizabethan England:

Nature that framed us of four elements,
Warring in our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls,—whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,—
Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest.

Marlowe's next play is *Doctor Faustus*, the story of the mediaeval scholar who pledged his soul to the devil for twenty-four years of pleasure and power. Accompanied by Mephistophilis Faustus visits realms ancient and modern, learns the secrets of magic arts, acquires vast knowledge, and at last is carried off in agony to hell. The play of *Faustus* is made up of scenes loosely strung together with little unity of design and disfigured with comic episodes of rather forced humor. In spite of its poor structure, the play holds the interest because of many striking scenes and certain passages of rare poetic beauty, such, for instance, as Faustus' enraptured speech to Helen:

Was this the face that launched a thousand ships
And burnt the topless towers of Ilium?
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.
Oh thou art fairer than the evening air
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars.

The Jew of Malta, Marlowe's third play, deals with Barabbas the Jew and his lust for money. Barabbas is a sort of first rough sketch of a character which was artistically finished in Shakespeare's Shylock. Marlowe's Jew is an unrelieved monster, the center of an accumulation of horrors which finally overwhelm him. After the first two or three acts the play becomes a bloody melodrama, though the structure is better than in the two preceding plays.

The last of Marlowe's dramas is *Edward II*, the tragic story of a weak king who lost his throne. Excellent in technique, restrained in emotion, strong in characterization, *Edward II* is Marlowe's masterpiece.

His Contribution.—Following the bent of his own fiery genius and striking boldly out into the unknown, Marlowe freed himself and the English drama from the rigid bondage of the classical rules. He violated the unities of time and place, introduced violent action on the stage, and infused into his central characters something of his own indomitable spirit. His dramas have been called "one-man plays," because in each there is one dominating personality typifying one controlling passion. In Tamburlaine we see the inordinate desire for conquest; in Faustus, the inordinate desire for knowledge and pleasure; in Barabbas the Jew, the inordinate desire for wealth; and in Edward, excessive devotion to a favorite.

Marlowe's first and most important contribution, then, is in freeing tragedy from classic formalism and thus preparing the way for Shakespeare and the full-fledged romantic drama. He was lacking in the ability to create complex character and to give his plays sustained action, and he was wanting in humor and other humanizing qualities; yet he was the first to show the world the immense possibilities of the Elizabethan Drama. Marlowe's second contribution is in revealing the capabilities of blank verse. Before Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* appeared, this form of verse, first used by Surrey, was cramped and mechanical, lacking in rhythmic freedom of movement. Marlowe in the Prologue to *Tamburlaine* boldly announces his purpose:

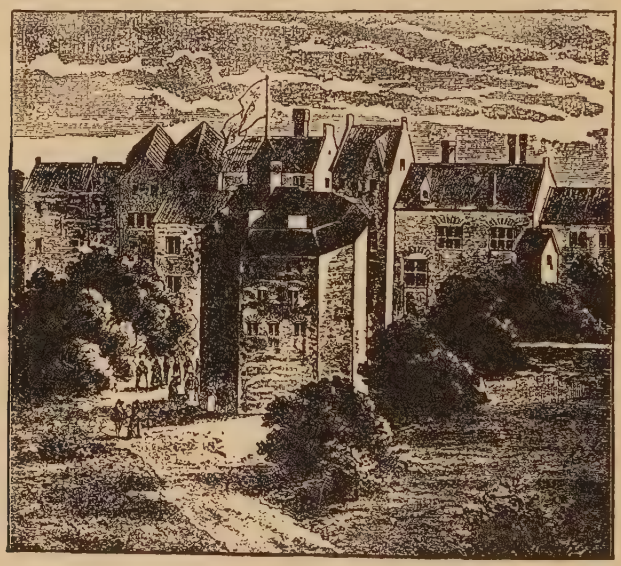
> From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits,
> And such conceits as clownage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead to you the stately tent of war,
> Where you shall hear the Scythian Tamburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms,
> And scourging kingdoms with his conquering sword.

He kept his word. His verse is rich and free, as untrammeled as his own daring genius; it rises and falls with the tide of emotion; it has such swing and majesty as fully to deserve Ben Jonson's passing tribute—"Marlowe's mighty line." Marlowe made blank verse a fit instrument of poetic expression, and Shakespeare and Milton perfected it.

The Several Dramatic Types.—For the sake of greater clearness it may be well briefly to enumerate just here the several types of drama which had pretty clearly defined themselves by 1590, when the careers of Shakespeare and his contemporaries were beginning. These various classes of plays developed with remarkable rapidity after the appearance of the first regular English drama thirty or forty years before, and flourished throughout the Elizabethan period. (1) **Court Plays** on classical themes romantically treated, chiefly by John Lyly. (2) **Romantic Drama,** Comedy and Tragedy, including such plays as Greene's *Orlando Furioso*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, *Tamburlaine*, and, later, most of Shakespeare's comedies and tragedies. Many of these romantic dramas were based on Italian sources. (3) **Domestic Drama,** a development of the native and local element, as early shown, for example, in *Gammer Gurton's Needle*. To this form of drama belong such later plays as Thomas Heywood's *Woman Killed with Kindness*, Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor*, the Comedy of Manners of Ben Jonson, and others. (4) **Historical Drama,** based on English history, biography, and legend, and usually known as Chronicle Plays, an early example of which is Bale's *King Johan*, already mentioned. Shakespeare's historical plays belong to this type, the popularity of which is attested by the fact that over two hundred chronicle plays were written within this period. In them the strong spirit of nationality after the victory over the Spanish Armada jubilantly expressed itself. These are the principal dramatic types which the great Elizabethan playwrights developed with more or less regularity.

The Elizabethan Theater.—The earliest plays had been acted on rude platforms in the open air, in halls of schools and castles, and in the courtyards of inns; up to 1576 no building for the public performance of plays had been erected. In that year the first London theater was built outside the northern wall of the city by James Burbage, father of the actor Richard Burbage, and named the Theater; soon another playhouse, called the Curtain, was erected in the same neighborhood. During the next twenty years the Bankside, or south (Surrey) bank, of the Thames came

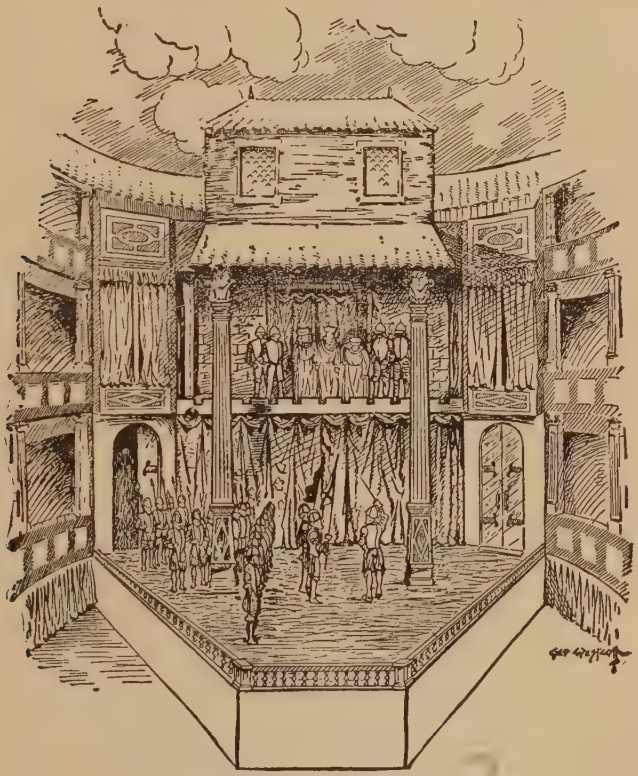
to be the theatrical center, and here by 1600 there were three great public theaters, the Rose, the Swan, and the Globe. Another public theater, the Fortune, was situated northwest of the walls; while the one prominent private theater, the Blackfriars, was within the city proper. The Thames was the great thoroughfare of London, and the south bank had long been the region of popular amusements, such, for instance, as bearbaiting and cockfighting.



GLOBE THEATER IN SHAKESPEARE'S DAY

Naturally, then, the Bankside became the popular theater district: here there was plenty of room, there was little danger from fire and pestilence, and there was freedom from Puritan interference with the boisterous and often unruly crowds on pleasure bent. These Bankside theaters, be it remembered, were public playhouses; for more select audiences the great halls in the houses of nobles or in royal palaces were the theaters, the Blackfriars being a popular extension of this more exclusive type.

The public theater was modeled after the courtyard of an inn, for a long time the favorite place of performance; while the private theater was in the nature of a room converted into a playhouse. Public theaters were round or hexagonal or octagonal, and one,



VIEW OF ELIZABETHAN STAGE
Timon of Athens, V, 4
By Permission of Columbia University Press

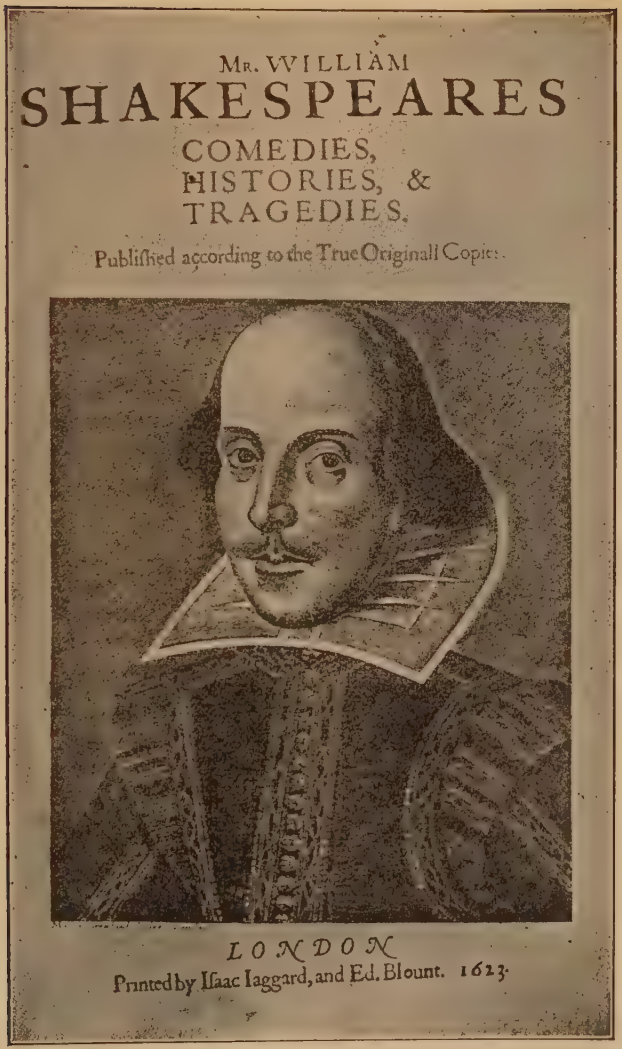
the Fortune, was square; they were constructed of wood and a sort of concrete. Within, the three stories formed three galleries after the manner of those around an inn yard. In these galleries sat the better class of spectators, while the large ground-space, or

pit, was occupied by the lower class, who noisily joked and jostled each other, smoked, ate, drank, and sometimes annoyed the players; for as the "groundlings" had to stand, they would naturally grow restless. The galleries were roofed over, but the pit was open to the weather. The stage projected far out into the pit, and on this broad platform the greater part of the action took place; back of this, however, was a space, or alcove, which could be cut off by a curtain strung from two pillars and used for inner scenes. Above this alcove was a balcony, or upper stage, which would be used, for instance, by Juliet in her famous moonlight interview with Romeo, or for representing a besieged army on the walls of a city. Above the little balcony and the back part of the stage was a roof, though most of the stage was uncovered.

More scenery was in use on an Elizabethan stage than is commonly supposed: such properties as trees, beds, thrones, tombs, wells, couches, and tables were common; there was machinery for lowering and raising supernatural characters; and painted scenes of a simple kind were used in private theaters. The costumes of the actors were quite elaborate, but no attempt was made at historical accuracy. Performances were given at two or three o'clock in the afternoon, lasting about two and a half hours, with no pauses between acts. In the private theaters, however, performances took place at night; the buildings were completely roofed and more luxuriously furnished. Players formed themselves into companies under the nominal patronage of some nobleman; women's parts were played by men or boys. Under these general conditions, then, was an Elizabethan play presented; and a clear understanding of the Shakespearean drama is not possible without some definite knowledge of the inside of an Elizabethan theater.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616)

His Life.—William Shakespeare, the greatest figure in our literature, was born in the little Warwickshire town of Stratford, on the winding Avon, in the month of April, 1564. In the church register is the record of the baptism of William, son of John Shakespeare, on April 26; as this ceremony usually took place when a child was three days old, April 23 (May 3 by the



TITLE-PAGE OF FIRST FOLIO EDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS
From a copy in the British Museum

"new style" reckoning) has come to be regarded as the day of his birth. His father John Shakespeare, who kept a general produce store in Stratford, came of an ancestry of sturdy farmers; his mother Mary Arden was the daughter of a rich landowner near Stratford. During the poet's childhood John Shakespeare held from time to time various public offices in the little town. William was the third of his eight children. The life of Shakespeare falls naturally into three periods: (1) The Early Years at Stratford; (2) The London Years; (3) The Closing Years in Stratford.

STRATFORD-ON-AVON
Shakespeare is buried in Trinity Church, shown in the background.

The Early Years at Stratford (1564-1587).—Stratford is delightfully situated in the charming midland district of England with its peaceful meadows, hawthorn hedges, stately elms, rose gardens, and shining streams. The Avon flows in graceful curve around the town by dipping willows, under arched bridges, and past the fine old church where the poet's body rests. The church, the guildhall, the grammar school, and a few other buildings, such, for instance, as the John Harvard House, look very much as they did in Elizabeth's day when Stratford was a village of about fifteen hundred souls. A mile off across the meadows is the little village of Shottery near which Anne Hathaway lived in the rustic cottage now famous over all the world. To this and to the birthplace in Henley Street and the other Stratford houses and spots associated with the master, thousands of pilgrims go every year as to a shrine. The whole region is romantic with traditions

that cluster about the countryside, the castle, and the ruin. Not far away is Warwick Castle with its antique towers and baronial halls and Guy of Warwick legends; in walking distance are the ruins of Kenilworth Castle where Leicester entertained the queen in 1575, and whither the boy William may have often rambled; at no great distance is the town of Coventry where the miracle plays were given; and nearer to Stratford is Charlecote, the great countryhouse of Sir Thomas Lucy, whose deer young William is said to have stolen. In such a region was William Shakespeare brought up.

Shakespeare attended the Stratford Grammar School, where he studied Lilly's Latin Grammar and read a number of the Latin classics, learned a little mathematics, and no doubt read and memorized parts of the English Bible. He must have left school at thirteen or fourteen in order to help his father in his business, for we know that about this time John Shakespeare was becoming seriously involved; and thus the youth was early brought in touch with practical affairs in the struggle against poverty. In 1582 the eighteen-year old Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, eight years older than himself. Four or five years later he left Stratford for the great world of London. The causes of his leaving, it may be surmised, were at least three: the need of a more adequate support for his wife and three children; the wish to relieve his father's declining fortunes; the ambitious desire to try his own fortune in a wider field of action. There is no just ground for the suggestion that his early departure was due to an unhappy marriage; there may be, however, some truth in the tradition which makes the deer-stealing incident at Charlecote an occasion of his leaving Stratford; it is more likely, indeed, that traveling companies of actors fired the young man's blood with stories of London life. At all events, to the great metropolis William Shakespeare went about 1586.

The London Years (1587-1611).—Of the details of the twenty-odd years of Shakespeare's life in London we have little knowledge; indeed, this is true of his life in general, as it is true of the lives of most of his fellow-dramatists. At first he probably performed menial tasks about the theaters, where he fell in with actors and playwrights; then he became an actor himself, and next learned how to work over old plays for presentation; from this apprenticeship he would naturally pass to the writing of plays. We know, thanks to the discoveries of an American scholar,[1] that Shakespeare had lodgings for some time at the house of a worthy Huguenot family named Mountjoy in Cripplegate, an eminently respectable part of London, and that he helped to arrange the marriage contract between his host's daughter and a young apprentice. References to Shakespeare in connection with this transaction and as a witness in a subsequent lawsuit, because of the non-

1 Professor C. W. Wallace, of the University of Nebraska, discovered in the Public Record Office, London, in 1909, certain documents on the matter referred to in the text. See *Harper's Magazine* for March, 1910.

fulfilment of marriage settlements, indicate that the poet was held in high esteem by his neighbors.

Shakespeare held shares in the Blackfriars and Globe theaters, and he purchased considerable land and the best house in Stratford. It is altogether likely that he visited his native town from time to time: his only son, Hamnet, died in 1596, and Susannah, his eldest daughter, was married in 1607 to Dr. John Hall. Shakespeare's life in London was in close association with that famous group of dramatists who were wont to gather at the Mer-

ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE, NEAR STRATFORD-ON-AVON

maid in Cheapside for "wit combats," but his friendly relations with the Earls of Pembroke and Southampton suggest a higher degree of social recognition than that to which most of his colleagues attained. The London years, then, were the productive years of Shakespeare's career: as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company he was a successful actor before public and court audiences; he wrote about two plays a year to be acted before these audiences; he wrote, besides, non-dramatic poetry and dedicated it to noblemen; he accumulated property.

The Closing Years in Stratford (1611-1616).—About 1611 Shakespeare must have returned to Stratford for good, though he afterward made several visits

to London. Just why, almost in the midst of a successful career, he should have left the busy world of London for the little country town of Stratford, we do not certainly know; perhaps he longed for a more leisurely, meditative life in his handsome village house with his family, whom he was now abundantly able to maintain in luxury; perhaps the newer type of play, gaudily melodramatic, which was rapidly growing in favor with the satiated London public, excited his disgust and made him resolve to "abjure his magic, break his staff, drown his book," and settle down fancy free by the quiet Avon. However that may be, to Stratford he assuredly returned and at New Place, in the heart of the town and near the guildhall, spent the rest of his days.

Here we may picture him entertaining his friends from the city, mingling with his neighbors as the public-spirited citizen, and reflecting on those serener aspects of human life with which his latest plays have to do. Two months after the marriage of his youngest daughter Judith to Thomas Quiney, son of an old friend and neighbor, the great poet and dramatist died, April 23, 1616, at the age of fifty-two. He was buried in the chancel of the Stratford church; and on the flat stone over his grave were engraved these now famous words by the poet himself, the purpose evidently being to prevent some superstitious sexton from removing the body for a richer tenant:

> Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
> To dig the dust enclosed here;
> Blest be the man that spares these stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

Seven years later a monument[1] to the poet was placed in the wall just over the tomb, consisting of a bust between columns, below which are inscribed tributes to his genius.

His Personality.—Contemporary references to Shakespeare make mention of his "civil demeanour," his "right happy and copious industry," characterizing him as "sweet Master Shakespeare" and "gentle Shakespeare." Among these Ben Jonson's cordial tribute deserves to be quoted: "I loved the man, and do honour his memory on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest, and of an open and free nature; had an excellent fancy, brave notions, and gentle expressions, wherein he flowed with that facility that sometimes it was necessary he should be stopped." In later traditions collected by Aubrey the antiquary (born 1626), he is referred to as "very good com-

[1] See frontispiece.

pany, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit." These and other references, to say nothing of indirect evidence from the plays themselves, warrant the statement of Sidney Lee, his scholarly biographer, that Shakespeare had "a genial temperament linked to a quiet turn for good-humoured satire."

But there is another side to Shakespeare's character: joined with his extraordinary literary powers and his general sociability was a shrewd capacity for practical affairs. He was more interested in restoring the family name at Stratford by paying off his father's debts, getting a coat-of-arms, and buying real estate in the town, than he was in writing for posterity. In London, because of his large share-holdings in two theaters and other sources of income, he was no doubt regarded as a prosperous business man; it has been estimated, indeed, that at the height of his success Shakespeare's total annual income from various sources was in present monetary values not less than $25,000. We have, moreover, accounts of numerous lawsuits for the recovery of debts in which the poet was the plaintiff.

As to Shakespeare's political and religious opinions, it is safe to say that they were in general those of the patriotic Englishman of the day; more tolerant, no doubt, than those of the masses or of the nobility, because freer from the provincialism of the one and from the somewhat narrow conventionalism of the other. There could hardly be a more futile undertaking, however, than to attempt to construct either a political or a religious creed for a great dramatist like Shakespeare out of the speeches of his characters.

A well-rounded, full-blooded, keenly observant, kindly, wondrously wise and highly gifted man; primarily a poet and playwright, and incidentally a philosopher—such, we may conclude, was William Shakespeare the Man.

His Dramatic Works.—Shakespeare's career of authorship extends over a period of about twenty years (1590–1611), during which he wrote something like thirty-seven plays, two narrative poems, one hundred and fifty-four sonnets, and a number of songs scattered through the plays. His work may therefore be considered

under two divisions: (1) the Dramas, and (2) the Non-dramatic Poems.

The dramas of Shakespeare have come down to us in two forms, the quarto edition and the folio edition: the quarto is a copy of a single play, the folio a collection of all the plays in a single volume. In 1623 two of Shakespeare's fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, brought out what is known as the First Folio, a large volume containing all the plays except *Pericles* and based on the manuscripts in possession of the theatrical companies; previous to this a number of the plays had appeared in quarto, or single, editions. Authors usually sold their plays to theatrical managers and made no effort to get them into print; the result was that popular plays were likely to be issued by unscrupulous publishers from inaccurate shorthand copies made in the theater. Many of Shakespeare's plays appeared in these "pirated" quarto editions before 1623, when the First Folio, or complete authorized edition of the plays, was published, the importance of which can hardly be overestimated. In this volume the plays are divided into Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies, a convenient and popular, though somewhat inaccurate classification. It is, on the whole, more satisfactory to arrange them into four groups corresponding to the four periods of Shakespeare's dramatic development.[1]

The Four Periods.—The first period extends from about 1590 to 1595 and may be called the **Period of Apprenticeship.** To this belong such early plays as *Love's Labour's Lost, Comedy of Errors, Richard III, Two Gentlemen of Verona,* and probably *Romeo and Juliet.* During these years the dramatist was experimenting, learning his art; at first he retouched old plays, worked with some more experienced playwright, then developed his subject alone, trying his hand at histories, comedies, tragedies. These early dramas abound in word-play, pretty conceits, rhymes, and in other evidences of youthful fancy; the verse lacks freedom

[1] A complete list of Shakespeare's plays is not given here. See an excellent recent work, *Introduction to Shakespeare,* by MacCracken, Pierce, and Durham; see also Dowden's *Shakspere Primer.*

A

Midſommer nights dreame.

As it hath beene ſundry times publikely acted, by the Right Honourable, the Lord Chamberlaine his ſeruants.

VVritten by VVilliam Shakeſpeare.

Printed by Iames Roberts, 1600.

TITLE-PAGE OF QUARTO EDITION OF
A Midsummer Night's Dream, 1600

of movement; the structure is loose-jointed; but along with the faults of immaturity there is the promise of mastery.

The second period covers the years from 1595 to 1600 and may be named the **Period of Mastery.** Here belong the historical plays, *Henry IV* and *Henry V*, and the comedies, *Merchant of Venice, Much Ado About Nothing, Twelfth Night, As You Like It,* and others. By this time the poet has a masterful grasp on plot and a greater ease of expression; he is interested in depicting the active, joyous side of life; his heroes, lovers, and ladies are full of brilliant talk and irrepressible gayety. In this period Shakespeare shows himself the man of the world mainly concerned with the outward things of life, but as yet untouched by deeper problems of human destiny.

The third period extends from 1600 to about 1608 and may be called the **Period of Tragic Gloom.** Within these years were written the great tragedies, *Julius Caesar, Hamlet, Macbeth, Othello* and *King Lear,* besides the dark and serious comedies, *All's Well* and *Measure for Measure.* The poet's mood has changed from genial gladness to somber world-weariness and even bitterness. We do not know what wrought this change; perhaps it was some great personal sorrow, or show of ingratitude from former friends—the sting of "benefits forgot"; more likely, it was deep reflection upon the baffling mysteries of life,—what Wordsworth calls

> the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this unintelligible world.

Certain it is, at any rate, that in this period of the full maturity of his powers Shakespeare was interested in the supreme moral problems of the world and made them the themes of his mightiest dramas; while the comedies of this third period are shot through with such dark threads of bitter irony that they tremble on the verge of tragedy. In the group of tragedies belonging to these years he achieved supremacy in his art.

The fourth period includes the remaining years of dramatic activity, from 1608 to about 1611-'12, and we may name this

the **Period of Serenity.** Here belong the *Tempest*, *Cymbeline*, and the *Winter's Tale*, comedies of such beauty and charm that they are often called "romances." The bitterness and gloom of the third period have disappeared; so has the rollicking joyousness of the second period; in their stead we find an atmosphere of serenity and calm. Supernatural beings coöperate with mortals to bring about a reign of universal peace and good will; mercy, reconciliation, forgiveness, are the shining virtues of the golden days of these latest dramas; sufferings and misunderstandings are forgotten in the final reunion at eventide. "Be cheerful, sir," says Prospero to Ferdinand:

> Our revels now are ended. These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air;
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

In order fully to appreciate this four-fold grouping of the plays as illustrating the development of Shakespeare's mind and art, one should read in succession four plays, a typical play from each period, paying careful attention to the movement of the lines by reading a number of them aloud, noting the puns and the rhymes, observing whether the characters act and talk in a lifelike manner, whether the story is well put together and whether it works steadily towards a definite and inevitable end. The reading of several plays from each group in regular order would lead to the conviction that in dramatic technique, in characterization, and in expression, a steady development is shown, from the crudities of such plays as *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Richard III*, on through the masterful story-telling and character-delineation of the *Merchant of Venice* and *Henry IV* (Falstaff), to the

complex plots and subtle character-study of *Hamlet* and *Lear* and the perfect ripeness of the *Tempest*.

Doubtful Plays.—There are a few plays which are usually classified as "doubtful plays," because it is fairly well settled that Shakespeare was author of only parts of them. *Titus Andronicus*, a crude and revolting "tragedy of blood," is evidently an old play worked over by Shakespeare in his early apprenticeship period; *Henry VI* (three parts) is the reconstruction of an old chronicle play by Shakespeare along with one or more of his early fellow-dramatists; *Richard III* is in part by Marlowe, or at least in imitation of Marlowe; parts of *Taming of the Shrew*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Pericles*, are by an unknown author; John Fletcher, the popular dramatist, must have had a hand in *Henry VIII*, for the style and meter of a number of scenes are un-Shakespearean but quite in the manner of Fletcher. The evidence on which scholars have based their conclusions as to the divided authorship of these plays is mainly internal,—that is, concerned with such matters as style, meter, technique, characterization. Several plays were at one time ascribed to Shakespeare with which he evidently had nothing to do; only one of these, indeed, the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, can justly lay claim to any Shakespearean quality.

Sources of the Plays.—There existed in accessible form in the Elizabethan Age a large fund of stories which the dramatists of that period were accustomed to use as raw material for plays, and Shakespeare in common with his fellow playwrights drew freely upon this stock. The more intelligent of the numerous patrons of the theaters doubtless knew these stories already, but that did not interfere with their enjoyment of them in attractive dramatic form; indeed, they enjoyed them all the more when cleverly dramatized. To transmute this crude material into the fine gold of real art demanded the highest genius; this becomes perfectly evident to any one who will take the trouble to compare a Shakespeare play with the prosaic narrative from which he drew the bare facts. In his hands dry-as-dust chronicles, to paraphrase the exquisite lines of Ariel's song, "suffer a change

into something rich and strange"; a half-civilized Dane of legendary story is transformed into the intellectual and courtly Hamlet.

The principal sources of Shakespeare's plays and, in fact, of the Elizabethan dramatists in general, are three: (1) Holinshed's *Chronicles* and Plutarch's *Lives*—the first a voluminous history of England, Scotland, and Ireland, published in 1578; and the second a volume of biographies of famous Greeks and Romans by a Greek author of the first century, a popular translation of which into English was made in 1579 by Thomas North. From Holinshed Shakespeare got his material for the historical plays as well as for two tragedies, *Macbeth* and *King Lear*, and one comedy, *Cymbeline;* and from North's Plutarch, the biographical matter for the tragedies of *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra.* (2) Italian and other romances, translations of which were common in England before Shakespeare began to write. From these stories, or "novelle" as the Italian romances were called, the bare plots of many comedies—*Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing* and *Twelfth Night*, for instance—and of one tragedy, *Othello*, were borrowed. (3) Material from older and cruder plays. This working over of old dramatic material was customary among the dramatists of the day; and several of Shakespeare's plays—*Richard III*, *Taming of the Shrew*, and *King Lear*, for example—are based more or less directly on old plays, though the new are, in life and art, infinitely removed from the old. The great dramatist changed the baser metal into gold through the magic of his alchemy.

The Non-dramatic Poetry.—Besides the dramatic works Shakespeare wrote two narrative poems, *Venus and Adonis* and the *Rape of Lucrece*, and a number of sonnets. *Venus and Adonis*, a poem of about twelve hundred lines, is based on the old classical story found in the Latin poet Ovid about the love of Venus for the beautiful youth Adonis; it is written in six-line stanzas, with five beats to the line of ten syllables, or iambic pentameter, the measure of the dramatic poetry. *Lucrece*, a longer poem than the other, relates the old Roman legend about the dishonoring of

the virtuous wife of a noble by the Roman king Tarquin and the consequent overthrow of that monarch; this is in seven-line stanzas, the Chaucerian "rhyme royal." Both poems are dedicated to Shakespeare's patron, the young Earl of Southampton, and are thought to have been written about 1593–'4. They abound in youthful fancies, striking bits of description, and pleasing sounds, but are more interesting to-day as promising first-fruits of genius than for any great intrinsic excellence.

With Shakespeare's *Sonnets* it is different; we would not willingly part with them. These sonnets, one hundred and fifty-four in all, have been a great puzzle to Shakespearian scholars: some critics interpret them as intensely personal, reflecting the poet's innermost feelings, "Shakespeare's Psalms," as Furnivall calls them; others, notably Sidney Lee, regard the sonnets as more or less conventional poetic exercises in a period when sonnet-writing was a prevailing fashion, every poet and courtier trying his hand at making them. The truth is probably to be found somewhere between these extremes: some of the sonnets have a tone of such high seriousness, such a depth of emotion, that we feel they must come from the poet's heart; others seem artificial, even trivial, as if written for mere pastime. More than three fourths of the sonnets are addressed to a man, a friend of the writer, and the rest to a woman, the mysterious "dark lady," of whose affection the man had robbed the poet; but the poet forgives the man because of his deep friendship for him—this is the substance of the slight narrative element which seems vaguely to shadow forth a real experience. The sonnets should be read for the exquisite poetry to be found in many of them, and not for profitless discussion; their haunting melody, mellow suggestiveness, and golden imagery, linger with the reader, soothing and refreshing him. Take this one, for instance:

> When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
> I summon up remembrance of things past,
> I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
> And with old woes now wail my dear time's waste:

Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long since cancelled woe,
And moan the expense of many a vanished sight;
Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er
The sad account of fore-bemoanèd moan,
Which I now pay as if not paid before.
But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
All losses are restored and sorrows end.

Or consider such stately, imaginative, musical, forward-looking lines as these, chosen here and there:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds.
. . . . . .

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy.
. . . . . .

Haply I think on thee, and then my state,
Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate.
. . . . . .

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come.

The *Sonnets* were published in 1609, though written within the years 1594–1603; in them the Elizabethan sonnet (three quatrains with a closing couplet) reached its highest excellence.

Shakespeare was also a song-maker, as were most of the Elizabethan dramatists; the numerous lyrics in his plays run the whole gamut of emotion, from the sensuous gayety of drinking songs and the sentimental appeal of serenade music to the almost hymn-like solemnity of the dirge in *Cymbeline* and the haunting echo-effect of Ariel's songs in the *Tempest*. All these lyrics seem to be

the spontaneous overflow of real feeling, gay or grave; their prevailing traits are simplicity and naturalness.

Shakespearean Characteristics and Influence.—No general estimate of Shakespeare can amount to much which begins and ends, as too many estimates have done, by detaching him from his age and purpose. He was an Elizabethan, lived and worked with Elizabethans upon common dramatic material, and wrote plays primarily intended to be played before Elizabethans. These facts must not be lost sight of in the midst of our just admiration for his splendid achievement, if we would interpret the man and his plays aright. His plays should be studied in the light of their development and in relation to the physical conditions of the Elizabethan stage on which they were acted; when so studied many incidents and situations no longer seem forced and unnatural. For instance, when we know that *Two Gentlemen of Verona* belongs to the earliest, or Apprenticeship Period, we are scarcely surprised at the abrupt, illogical ending of the play in the sudden forgiveness of a treacherous friend and lover; and when we realize how little scenery there was in an Elizabethan theater, we cease to wonder at the many long and sometimes tedious descriptive passages in the plays. The steady growth of Shakespeare's mind and art is manifest to any thoughtful reader; his genius did not come to full fruition suddenly, but only after long and painstaking labor at his art: from Richard to Hamlet, from Julia and Juliet to Portia and Cleopatra, from Henry V to Prospero, is a great way.

When we look into the plays even superficially, we are struck with the amazing range of his information and his deep and searching knowledge of human nature. This information is not always scientifically accurate, to be sure; there are anachronisms, geographical impossibilities, tricksy tamperings with facts; but what of it? With Shakespeare always "the play's the thing"; human nature is the one constant quantity through the ages, and to that he is ever true; his aim in his plays was "to hold the mirror up to nature," not to be learned and exact. It is a great

mistake, indeed, to suppose that Shakespeare was learned in an academic sense, or that he was primarily a philosopher. He was a close observer of life in an age of remarkable vitality and in a city of endless opportunities for the study of every type of humanity; as an actor and man of the world he must have mingled freely in this moving throng. He was, moreover, a wide reader at a time when the flood tide of the Renaissance was bringing into England the best literature of the continent; translations of the ancient classics, of French and Italian romances, were accessible; he no doubt had access to the libraries of his noble friends and patrons. Besides, it will be remembered, Shakespeare had considerable experience in practical affairs; he was concerned in lawsuits, the purchase and selling of real estate, the management of theaters. All this was a liberal education. Add to this the gift of genius and the habit of hard work, and it is not so difficult to understand why Shakespeare possessed wide information about literature and life.

The lifelikeness of his characters is as wonderful as the bewildering variety of them. We pay Shakespeare the greatest of compliments when we talk of his characters as if they were actual men and women, and that is just what the English-speaking world has been doing since they became a part of our literature. They have long ago superseded their historic or legendary prototypes in the popular mind; kings and princes have been re-created, lovers and ladies of the ancient and mediaeval worlds snatched from oblivion and endued with familiar immortality, commonplace clowns and jesters ennobled with wit and large humanity. They do not form a picture gallery, but a vast community of living men and women, each a distinct individual whom we see and know apart from the rest. They talk and act as people do in real life; they do not suggest each other, they do not repeat each other. Try as we will, we cannot think them out of existence; their motives are their own and come from within, and they influence one another out of their own volition and not from external compulsion. Their personalities are complex, a mingling of good and evil impulses, the good or the evil prevailing accord-

ing to circumstances and the strength or weakness of the will; few approach to sainthood and only two, Iago and Edmund, are pure villains. They are subject to the laws of a moral universe, and they illustrate the working of ethical principles in the great crises of life: to the evildoer retribution comes in the awful ruin of the soul, as to Macbeth, and the innocent may be involved in the wreck.

Shakespeare does not attempt to penetrate beyond the veil into the future life, but his profound studies of moral problems in the greater plays have a distinctly spiritual value in that they strengthen our belief in goodness, purity, and the perfectibility of character, and cause us to renew our allegiance to noble ideals. His range is almost infinite: the stateliness and gloom of tragedy, the rollicking jollity, sprightliness, and serene romantic beauty of comedy, pathos and humor, the terrible and the trivial, all come within his ken. And through it all is seen Shakespeare's tolerant sympathy; he does not trifle with his characters, as some of his contemporaries do, does not treat them as puppets; to him, and for that reason to us, they are men and women with the sacred rights of personality.

Shakespeare's influence on our language and our literature it would be impossible to estimate; from his vast vocabulary our speech has been immeasurably enriched; his plays and the King James translation of the Bible (1611) have done more to fix the mother tongue than any other English classics. In our literature idioms and phrases from his plays have been assimilated until they are regarded as common literary property, while in the daily speech of educated men and women they have long been current coin. If we have been fortunate enough in our youth to make the acquaintance of his characters, we have gained a host of distinguished friends who have created for us standards of life and art whereby we may know the good, the true, and the beautiful when we meet them. To the imperial intellect that shaped that world of high poetry and lifelike action we may fitly apply the exclamation of Hamlet: "How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a god!"

SHAKESPEARE'S CONTEMPORARIES AND SUCCESSORS

To us Shakespeare is such a dominating figure in the Elizabethan Drama that we are likely to detach him unduly from his dramatic contemporaries; preëminent, indeed, he is in the great field of romantic tragedy and comedy made human and morally vital not only to his own but to succeeding generations. There are certain relatively minor forms of the drama, however, in which several of his contemporaries are notable interpreters—the Comedy of Humours and the Domestic Drama, for instance,—while the Romantic Drama, in which he especially excels, passes into the hands of weaker men whose imagination was touched with decay. Shakespeare, be it remembered, served his apprenticeship with the early Elizabethan group, of which Marlowe was the chief figure, and humanized and perfected their ideals; Shakespeare's later contemporaries and successors either developed new phases of the drama or worked with less native freshness and seriousness on the older material.

Doubtless the popular taste was changing, too, after the seventeenth century was well under way; the buoyancy, the immense vitality, the enthusiasm, of the "spacious days" of full national consciousness were giving place to a faint weariness. The satiated audiences demanded more showy and stimulating plays, and to meet the demands of a decadent taste the romantic dramatists, Shakespeare's later contemporaries, put forth brilliant but artificial plays; some of these plays border on melodrama, and some are blood-and-thunder tragedies abounding in unnatural situations and lurid incidents, in the midst of which occur saving passages of really great poetry. Several plays of Beaumont and Fletcher and the tragedies of Webster and Ford belong to this class. It is impossible, however, to divide Shakespeare's contemporaries into well-defined groups, inasmuch as each dramatist wrote more than one kind of play. Regarding Ben Jonson as the greatest, we may consider him first, and then take up as representative of the rest Beaumont and Fletcher, Dekker, Heywood, Middleton, Webster, Massinger, Ford, Shirley.

BEN JONSON

BEN JONSON (1573-1637)

His Life.—Ben Jonson was born in Westminster, then not a part of London proper, in 1573, of Scotch ancestry. His father, who seems to have been of gentle blood, died shortly before the birth of his son; his mother married a bricklayer a few years afterward, and Ben was brought up by his stepfather. Hence the tradition that he served an apprenticeship at his stepfather's trade, which is likely true. He attended the famous Westminster School, where he was helped financially and otherwise by William Camden the eminent scholar, at that time one of the masters in the school.

We next hear of Jonson with the English army in the Netherlands fighting against Spain. Returning to London about 1592, he soon married, and began a struggle with poverty, doing hack-work for the theaters for several years; he became an actor by 1595. It seems unlikely that Jonson ever attended either of the great universities, though later in life he received degrees from both Oxford and Cambridge in recognition of his classical scholarship and literary work. In spite of untoward circumstances Jonson had somehow managed to acquire sound and extensive learning in

the classics. In 1598 his first important play, *Every Man in his Humour*, appeared, and his reputation was made. Meanwhile, he had fought a duel with a fellow-actor, served a short term in prison in consequence, and changed his religious faith from Protestantism to Catholicism, returning to the Church of England twelve years later. During the next few years following the appearance of his first great comedy (which, by the way, was presented by Shakespeare's company of actors, Shakespeare himself playing a part) Jonson had a quarrel with two of his fellow-dramatists, Marston and Dekker, satirizing them and the contemporary drama unmercifully.

The great period of Jonson's career lies between the years 1603 and 1625. In these years he wrote his three best comedies, his tragedies, and a series of Court Masques which were presented with elaborate staging and music under the direction of the famous artist, Inigo Jones. These dramatic and musical entertainments were in high favor with James I, who rewarded Jonson by making him Poet Laureate in 1616. This same year Jonson published a folio edition of his works; two years later he made a visit in Scotland to the poet Drummond of Hawthornden, from whom we have an interesting book of impressions about Jonson. Some years later Jonson was appointed Chronologer of the City, a position which brought him into association with a number of the nobility. From 1625 Jonson's dramatic power and influence declined; Charles I seems not to have admired him as much as his predecessor had done; moreover, Jonson had quarreled with Inigo Jones, the king's architect. With a considerable circle of literary followers, however, who formed the famous "Tribe of Ben," he was supreme dictator and reigned at the Devil Tavern as the acknowledged head of English letters. Jonson died in 1637 and was buried in Westminster Abbey; the slab over his tomb contains the simple inscription, "O Rare Ben Jonson."

His Personality.—Ben Jonson is personally the most clear-cut, commanding figure among the Elizabethans: big in body, rugged of feature, brusque and somewhat overbearing in manner, he was what in everyday speech we would call "a character." Picturesque and positive in expression, he made enemies, fought them with sword and pen, inspired confidence in his friends, and held his own argument by mental and physical forcefulness. Fuller, in a well-known comparison, has likened Ben Jonson to a heavy Spanish galleon and Shakespeare to a trim and light English man-of-war in their wit combats at the Mermaid—Jonson slow and clumsy, Shakespeare quick and agile in darting at the galleon

and escaping before the enemy could get ready to strike. Jonson's domineering personality, his arrogance, his egotism, his dogmatism, fitted him for the rôle of literary dictator. His solid learning and strong character drew around him a crowd of young writers to whom he became a literary father and upon whom he made a lasting impression. Although afflicted with disease and poverty, he triumphed over both by his indomitable energy and invincible will; in these characteristics and particularly in his sturdy honesty he resembles Dr. Samuel Johnson, the literary dictator of the eighteenth century. Ben Jonson was the most critically learned of the Elizabethan dramatists.

His Works and Influence.—Ben Jonson's dramatic works consist of comedies, tragedies, and masques. Besides his first comedy, *Every Man in his Humour*, which was unlike anything before it, three other comedies may be mentioned as illustrative of his range and method in this division of drama—the *Alchemist*, *Volpone*, and *Epicœne, or the Silent Woman*. These plays belong to the Comedy of Humours: in the Jonsonian sense a "humour" is a whim, a foible, a peculiarity of temperament, an idiosyncrasy, often so pronounced, indeed, that it becomes a ruling passion. Thus, in the *Alchemist* the principal character, one Subtle, plays on the gullibility of a number of people whose hobby is alchemy, or the search for the "philosopher's stone" which was supposed to turn baser metals into gold; in *Volpone*, in many respects Jonson's most powerful play, the master passion of greed is portrayed with such biting satire that the play is in part a tragedy.

Of these comedies the *Silent Woman* is probably most interesting to a modern reader, because it is less technical in its language than the others and has more gayety and grace. Morose, a disagreeable old egotist with a perfect abhorrence of noise, is persuaded by his mischievous nephew to marry a "silent woman" who, besides possessing the desirable quality of dumbness, is young and pretty. Immediately after the ceremony, however, the bride finds her tongue and also her temper, with the result that Morose, now almost distracted, agrees to make his scamp of a nephew his heir

if he will only get him a divorce. The nephew, having obtained this desired promise, discloses to his uncle the fact that the lady he has just married is only a boy in disguise. This comedy acts well to-day, as those who have seen it staged can testify; it abounds in witty speech and amusing situations, and is really a comedy of manners.

These comedies of Jonson deal in a realistic way with the social life of his day, and from them we may gain a fair idea of the surface characteristics of the masses of the Elizabethan people. He could not write the romantic comedy of sentiment of the Shakespearean order; Jonson's temperament was colder than that of his great contemporary and his minutely classical learning fettered his imagination. He was a master of plot structure because he usually observed the classical unities of place, time, and subject; but most of his plays are rather tedious to the modern reader, lacking as they do the essential human quality, the geniality, the charity of those of his friend Shakespeare.

Jonson's tragedies, *Sejanus* and *Catiline*, are not great plays, though admirably constructed; the lofty tone and heroic characters of romantic tragedy were beyond the reach of such a born realist as Jonson. In the writing of Masques for Court entertainments he was remarkably successful. These spectacles were presented with musical and scenic accessories of the most elaborate sort, surpassing in certain particulars the Italian entertainments from which the English Masque (known in older times as "disguisings" and to-day as "masquerades") was developed. Jonson gave more definite dramatic form to the Masque, his masterpiece in this species of drama being the splendid *Masque of Queens*. Jonson had a fine lyric gift, and many of his songs and odes and other occasional poems compare favorably with those of the best lyric poets of the day. He published two important volumes of shorter poems, *Underwoods* and *The Forest*. His poetic tribute "To the Memory of my Beloved Master, William Shakespeare," is well known, while his "Song to Celia" beginning, "Drink to me only with thine eyes," is one of the famous lyrics of our literature. In addition to his plays, masques, and poems, Jonson left a volume

in prose called *Timber*, short comments on men and things, in which his power as a critic is revealed.

Ben Jonson's influence may be summed up thus: (1) He exercised a wholesome restraint in an age when dramatic structure was too frequently neglected because of romantic extravagance. He was a classicist in the midst of romanticists. As a pioneer classicist his influence was felt in the late seventeenth and earlier eighteenth century when classicism reached its height in Dryden and Pope. (2) He is a forerunner of the brilliant Comedy of Manners of the Restoration Period. (3) He had an effect upon the Cavalier Poets and other later contemporaries. As a critic and literary censor Jonson exerted a profound influence upon later dramatists.

Beaumont and Fletcher.—Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) and John Fletcher (1579–1625) are always spoken of together as forming an unbroken dramatic partnership; and while they did collaborate in a number of plays, Fletcher was the sole author of many others and joint-author of still others with Massinger and probably with Shakespeare. Beaumont came of an old and prominent family, was educated at Oxford, studied law but soon abandoned it for play-writing. Fletcher was the son of a Bishop of London, was educated at Cambridge, and began writing for the stage about 1607. Beaumont died in 1616, and Fletcher during the remaining nine years of his life wrote alone or with other dramatists, having had a share in at least fifty dramas, including the Beaumont collaboration. Both these men began their careers by writing comedies of manners, Fletcher's dealing with contemporary London life and Beaumont's satirizing and burlesquing the current drama. From this they passed to romantic comedy and tragedy, by which they are now chiefly known. Two plays may be mentioned as typical products of this intellectual partnership, *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy*. The theme of *Philaster* is somewhat similar to that of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline* and frequently occurs in the romantic drama, namely, the unwarranted jealousy of a lover and the devotion of a love-lorn maiden who in the disguise of a page follows this unworthy lover; the

interest in *The Maid's Tragedy* centers in the conflict in the hero's soul between the dictates of personal honor and loyalty to the king who has wronged him.

These plays are well constructed, contain striking situations and passages of exquisite poetry, but the action and the characters often seem unnatural, and there is in general a manifest striving after effect, a worked-up intensity which suggests melodrama. Furthermore, the moral tone is low, due to the false psychology in action and character and to the frequent coarseness of the language. While the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher show great cleverness and versatility in the management of plot and reveal a more intimate knowledge of high social life than most dramas of the time, they lack the loftiness and the sanity of Shakespeare's, and they give evidence of general dramatic decadence. As far as we can make out, Beaumont was the more serious, the more gifted in constructive power and in the nobility of his verse, of the two partners; Fletcher had a lighter and more varied imagination and wrote verse of greater lyric sweetness.

Dekker, Heywood, Middleton.—These three men may be considered together as representing in the main the domestic drama and comedy of manners, though their plays, particularly those of Middleton, cover a wider range, some of them belonging to romantic tragedy. Their writing as a whole is more virile and breezy, more genuinely Elizabethan, than that of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Of Dekker's life little is known: he was born about 1570, spent his early years doing hack-work for the theaters, later wrote prose pamphlets as well as plays, arranged pageants for the Lord Mayor of London, was imprisoned for debt, and came to know well the seamy side of London life. His best plays are *The Shoemaker's Holiday* and *Old Fortunatus*. The first is a comedy of middle-class life in which a London shoemaker, who becomes mayor, his wife, his daughter Rose, and her lover, disguised as a shoemaker's apprentice, are the central figures; the second is a dramatized fairy story of the famous wishing-hat and purse of Fortunatus. *The*

Shoemaker's Holiday is one of the merriest, most delightful comedies in our literature.

Thomas Heywood was educated at Cambridge, and spent his life among the actors and playwrights in London, industriously writing plays, two hundred and twenty of which he says he had "at least a main finger in." Only twenty-four of these, however, have been preserved, of which *A Woman Killed with Kindness* and *The Fair Maid of the West* may be regarded as the best. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* is a domestic drama about an erring and repentant wife who pines away and dies, reconciled on her deathbed to her magnanimous husband: a play of considerable tenderness and quiet beauty in spite of a few manifestly unreal situations. *The Fair Maid of the West* is a dashing, breezy sea-drama, full of action, the talk of sailors, fights and sights in strange lands, the atmosphere of Elizabethan voyages of discovery and heroism. Heywood excelled in the drama of simple domestic life and in realistic romance.

Thomas Middleton (1570–1627), described by himself as a "gentleman," was trained for the law, but, like many other young men of the day, soon turned to playwriting, in which his knowledge of law courts stood him in good stead. He wrote comedies and tragedies, realistic and romantic, alone and in collaboration. Among his comedies *A Trick to Catch the Old One* is certainly the most readable to-day; it is the story of how an impecunious nephew outwitted his rich uncle and became his heir by the help of a rumor of an intended marriage with a rich widow. Middleton's best tragedy is *The Changeling*, in which there is a good deal of blood-and-thunder, after the order of the older "tragedies of blood," relieved by stretches of really fine poetry. Middleton is an unequal writer, reminding us of Shakespeare ever and anon, and then degenerating into sensationalism.

John Webster.—In the judgment of all competent students of the Elizabethan Drama John Webster, about whom personally little or nothing is certainly known, ranks not far below Shakespeare in power of imaginative splendor. His genius is narrow but wonderfully intense. Webster's greatest play is *The Duchess*

of Malfi, the story of the sufferings and murder of a high-born lady who married a man of lower rank and for that offense was tortured to death by her inhuman brothers. It is the last conspicuous example of the Elizabethan "tragedy of blood" which began with Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy. The Duchess of Malfi* is full of gloomy horrors, such as wax figures representing the dead, masked assassins, clammy hands of death, and haunted rooms. Webster's imagination worked with tortuous intrigues and revenges befitting the dark Italian subjects which he chose for his tragedies. All this somber tangle of villainy is lighted up by the gracious and dignified figure of the Duchess, over whose dead body her brother, Duke Ferdinand, horror-stricken at his own action and at last impressed with her innocence and beauty, utters the famous line:

> Cover her face; mine eyes dazzle; she died young.

Striking passages here and there in this play seem to be reminiscent of Shakespeare, reaching a lofty height of sustained passion.

Massinger, Ford, Shirley.—In the plays of these three men the splendid Elizabethan Drama comes to an end and the curtain falls. Phillip Massinger wrote both comedy and tragedy of more or less artificial and overstrained nature, but one comedy, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts,* achieved a deserved popularity which it has never wholly lost; it has given to our literature a classic figure in Sir Giles Overreach. John Ford had a morbid imagination, sought for abnormal situations, and strove to please the taste of a jaded public. The structure of his plays is good, for he was a leisurely writer, and his blank verse is excellent; it is the essential unreality of his dramas which marks them as belonging to the twilight hours of a glorious day. The best of them is *The Broken Heart;* it was heart failure, indeed, that the once virile Elizabethan Drama was afflicted with. Then came James Shirley, the last of the long procession, with his labored imitative tragedy, without freshness, correct enough in literary quality but wanting in action and lifelike characters. Shirley wrote one interesting comedy, *Hyde Park,* the realistic prose of which, reflecting the fashionable

talk of London society, resembles that of the later brilliant but corrupt Restoration Comedy of Manners.

The Closing of the Theaters (1642).—During the fifty or sixty years extending from Marlowe to Shirley the Drama had flourished with unexampled vigor and beauty, had grown more and more artificial, and had finally played itself out in dissipation and dirt. It had passed from the parlor to the gutter, and was no longer respectable; at least, so thought the Puritans, who were in power now, and they were right in condemning the flippant, trashy, and decadent plays presented at the public theaters. Accordingly, in 1642 by an act of Parliament the theaters were closed, and not until the Restoration in 1660 were they opened again.

III. ELIZABETHAN PROSE

Although the Elizabethan Age was preëminently a time of poetic utterance in drama and lyric, it gave to the world some notable prose as well. Prose is always slower than poetry in its development toward a clear and artistic form, and the prose of this period, particularly of the earlier part, shows little of the restraint and formal accuracy of our modern prose. This is a period of origins in our prose literature, of experiments toward a more settled form; to us, therefore, the earliest Elizabethan prose writings are curiosities of literature rather than genuine classics. This is true of the prose of John Lyly in *Euphues*, already referred to, with its artificial balancing of phrases and its affected style; it is true in a less degree of Sidney's *Arcadia*, with its long sentences and tangled phrases and its essentially poetic style; it is true to a great extent in Greene's, Nash's, and Lodge's romances. It would not be desirable in so brief a work as this to attempt to consider these earlier prose experiments in our literature: it will be sufficient for our purposes to indicate the great variety of subject matter in Elizabethan Prose and then to take up several representatives of the best prose of the period.

Most of the Elizabethan prose works may be included under the following heads: (1) **Critical and Satirical,** as Sidney's *Apology*

SIR WALTER RALEIGH

for Poesie and Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy;* (2) **Romances,** as Sidney's *Arcadia* and Lodge's *Rosalind;* (3) **Religious,** as Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity;* (4) **Historical and Philosophical,** as Sir Walter Raleigh's and Francis Bacon's; (5) **Travels and Translations,** as Richard Hakluyt's *Voyages and Discoveries,* North's *Plutarch,* and the *Authorized Version of the Bible.* From this very condensed list we may choose for brief consideration Raleigh, Hooker, Bacon, and the King James Bible.

Raleigh.—Next to Sir Philip Sidney, Sir Walter Raleigh is the most romantic figure in the Elizabethan Age, and like Sidney he was only incidentally a man of letters. Raleigh wrote verses, as did all accomplished courtiers, but his right to a place in English literature depends more upon certain eloquent prose passages in his *History of the World* than upon his verses. This large work he composed during his long imprisonment in the Tower of London

ending with his execution in 1618. It was an ambitious undertaking, for Raleigh began at the creation and on the way down toward modern times discussed law, mythology, theology, magic, war, and the ideal form of government; but he got no further than 130 B. C. The book has of course no value as history and is interesting to-day only because parts of it reveal the writer's opinions and personality; indeed, one cannot but regret that Sir Walter did not spend those years in writing a book of recollections. Whenever he digresses from his narrative of events into a discussion of the characters of great men, his writing becomes literature; or when he touches on matters of personal experience, such as wars and conquests, the sentences become shorter and clearer, the style grows impassioned, and the movement rhythmical. No better example of this heightened and musical prose of the great passages in his *History of the World* could be found than the oft-quoted closing apostrophe to Death:

> O eloquent, just and mighty death! Whom none could advise, thou hast persuaded! What none have dared, thou hast done! And whom all the world has flattered, thou only hast cast out of the world and despised! Thou hast drawn together all the far-fetched greatness, all the pride, cruelty and ambition of men; and covered it all over with these two narrow words: *Hic jacet.*

Hooker.—Richard Hooker (1554–1600) was a theologian and philosopher, and the author of a work on Church government, the *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*. Hooker was educated at Oxford, taught there awhile, and spent the rest of his life, except for several years of preaching in London, in a quiet country parish. He was of shy, retiring nature, with the scholar's dislike of worldly struggle and turmoil, preferring to live where he could "see God's blessings spring out of the earth and be free from noise." In his country retreat he composed his *Ecclesiastical Polity*, the fundamental idea of which is "the unity and all-embracing character of law as the manifestation of the divine order of the universe." It is judicial in tone, comprehensive in scope, and liberal in thought; the language is stately and sonorous, moving along in periods

of great dignity and solemnity. English prose before Hooker had no such stateliness or sweep; because of its eloquence, its spaciousness, and its clearness and depth of thought, the *Ecclesiastical Polity* deserves to be remembered as one of our great prose masterpieces. These admirable sentences, for example, show Hooker's large and just spirit:

> But with any partial eye to respect ourselves, and by cunning to make those things seem the truest which are the fittest to serve our purpose, is a thing which we neither like nor mean to follow. Wherefore that which we take to be generally true concerning the mutability of laws, the same we have plainly delivered, as being persuaded of nothing more than we are of this, that whether it be in matter of speculation of or practice, no untruth can possibly avail the patron and defender long, and that things most truly are likewise most behovefully spoken.

No more eloquent words about the majesty of law were ever written than those at the end of the first book of the *Ecclesiastical Polity:*

> Of law there can be no less acknowledged, than that her seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world, all things in heaven and earth do her homage, the very least as feeling her care, and the greatest as not exempted from her power, both angels and men and creatures of what condition soever though each in different sort and manner, yet all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

FRANCIS BACON (1561-1626)

His Life.—Bacon was born in London, in 1561. His father was Sir Nicholas Bacon, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal, one of the leading advisers of the queen, while his uncle by marriage was Lord Burleigh, Elizabeth's great minister. Thus it will be seen that Francis Bacon began life amid the most favorable surroundings. At twelve years of age he was ready for college and was accordingly sent along with his older brother to Cambridge, where he entered Trinity College. Here he spent three years and here he first met Queen Elizabeth, who playfully called him her "little Lord Keeper." At Cambridge Bacon became dissatisfied with the philosophy of Aristotle as being unproductive of definite and practical results. After leaving Cambridge he spent two or three years in France attached to the English embassy; upon his return he continued the study of law and by 1582 was ready for practice. A few years later he entered politics, was elected to

Parliament, and was thereafter steadily promoted from one official position to another, becoming in turn Solicitor General, Attorney General, Lord Keeper, and finally Lord Chancellor, with the title of Viscount St. Albans. Meanwhile, Bacon had continued his studies in philosophy, had published several works, including his *Essays*, and had taken part in the prosecution of the powerful Earl of Essex, his friend and liberal benefactor, who had lost the queen's favor and been executed in 1601. Bacon's elaborate defense of the prominent part he took in the trial did not serve to remove the impression that he had shown base ingratitude to a former friend; in such a crisis Bacon preferred to keep the favor of the queen rather than sacrifice himself for a friend.

Under Elizabeth's successor, James I, Bacon reached the height of his fame: he stood high in the king's favor, he had triumphed over his enemies, he was an influential writer, he was a powerful statesman at the head of the House of Lords. Suddenly, almost without warning, he fell from official prosperity into deep disgrace; for in 1621 a committee of Parliament brought against him charges of corruption in office to the effect that he had accepted bribes from suitors in court. Bacon wrote to the king defending himself against the charges, but when pressed by his accusers he made full confession, beseeching his judges "to be merciful to a broken reed." He was sentenced to pay an enormous fine and sent to prison; the king remitted the fine and soon caused him to be released from prison, and he went forth a disgraced and ruined man. The remaining five years of his life he spent in retirement and devoted them to study and writing. Bacon died in 1626 as the result, it is said, of a cold caught from making an experiment in regard to the antiseptic properties of snow on a freshly killed fowl. He was literally a victim to that inductive scientific method of which he was the brilliant pioneer.

In Lord Bacon there were two distinct men—one the scholar and philosopher who "had taken all knowledge to be his province," ambitious to devote his luminous intellect to the enlightenment of mankind; the other the worldly seeker after preferment, hanging on princes' favors, living extravagantly, and finally violating his oath of office. With his rare mental endowments there was combined a singular bluntness of moral perception. What compels our admiration is not Bacon's character but his majestic intellect and his patient devotion to pure thought. In the introduction to one of his works he speaks of himself "as having a mind nimble and versatile enough to catch the resemblances of things and at the same time steady enough to fix and distinguish their subtler differences; as being gifted by nature with desire to seek, patience to doubt, fondness to meditate, slowness to assert, readiness to reconsider, carefulness to dispose and set in order." These words fitly describe Bacon the scholar and thinker and reveal the scientific temper of his mind.

His Works and His Contribution to Literature.—The most important of Bacon's works are the *Advancement of Learning*, the *Novum Organum*, and the *Essays*. The *Advancement of Learning* (1605) and the *Novum Organum* (1620) were written in Latin, since Bacon was doubtful about the permanency of the English language and since Latin was preëminently the language of scholars. In the first of these works he discusses the vast possibilities of knowledge, arguing in a clear, systematic manner and with abundant illustrations for the dignity of learning; in the second, he proposes a new method for the discovery and promotion of knowledge. Bacon early realized the unfruitfulness of the deductive, or purely speculative, methods of the older philosophers derived from Aristotle; he advocated the patient study of the facts of nature by careful experiment, such a method of study as we find employed in all scientific laboratories to-day. From this attention to details he argued that ultimately the investigator might arrive at the discovery of general laws—such was the beginning of the inductive method of reasoning on which all modern science is based. Bacon is therefore, in a sense, the forerunner of Newton, Huxley, Darwin, and other great scientists, though he was not himself a practical scientist but an advanced thinker, stimulating others and showing them the way.

To literature, however, Bacon's chief contribution is his volume of fifty-eight *Essays* published in full in 1625, the first two editions, issued in 1597 and 1612 respectively, containing only a part of the present number. The essays are on a variety of subjects—Studies, Truth, Riches, Friendship, Travel, Gardens, Ambition—treated as a rule in the spirit of worldly wisdom. By an "essay" Bacon meant a trial at a subject, a collection of suggestive comments rather than a finished discussion—a mere skeleton as compared, for instance, with a modern essay, which is really a treatise. Bacon's essays remind one of a wise man's jottings in his notebook to be used later as headings for the divisions of an extended discourse. The sentences are short and pithy, packed full of wisdom, secular proverbs, the sagacious observations of an experienced and profound political philosopher. Bacon called his

essays "dispersed meditations," and he intended them to be practical enough to "come home to men's business and bosoms." These sententious comments on things political and moral stick in the memory; they have helped to enforce many a lesson in political and social ethics; they are among the most quotable prose utterances in our literature. Such statements as these go straight to the heart of the matter: "Virtue is like a rich stone, best plain set"; "Revenge is a kind of wild justice"; "God Almighty first planted a garden"; "Suspicions among thoughts are like bats among birds"; "A crowd is not company, and faces are but a gallery of pictures, and talk but a tinkling cymbal where there is no love." Much of the familiar essay on Studies has passed into the common fund of literary quotation. Bacon contributed greatly to the clearness and directness of English prose through these direct, short, and crisp sentences, which are in pleasing contrast to the long, involved Latinistic sentences common among writers in his day.

Besides the works already mentioned, Bacon wrote the *Wisdom of the Ancients*, a somewhat fanciful work interpreting classic mythology; the *New Atlantis*, in the spirit of More's Utopia; the *History of Henry VII*, an admirable piece of historical writing; and a metrical version of the Psalms which proves that Bacon was no poet. His essays alone are of vital interest to-day.

The King James Bible.—In 1611 was published the Authorized, or King James, Version of the Bible, a great monument of English prose. Over forty of the most eminent scholars of England, duly appointed by the king, united to produce a standard translation of the Bible, and after several years of diligent labor, gave to the world this now famous version. Although translating from the original languages, they followed previous versions more or less closely, so that from Wyclif on through Tyndale to the 1611 version the continuity and influence of the English Bible is virtually unbroken. The purpose of the translators was to render the Bible into popular and not literary English, so that the people at large might gladly read and easily understand it; and by hitting upon the racy, idiomatic turns of the best colloquial speech they

all unconsciously produced a literary classic. The strong, simple, concrete words of our English Bible together with the splendid rhythm of its impassioned prose and the milder cadence of its narratives have made it a masterpiece of style and diction, to which all important English writers since have been debtors. From Milton and Bunyan to Tennyson and Ruskin, the makers of our modern English bear witness to the harmony, simplicity, and energy of the language of the King James Bible. An extract from the first "authorized edition" is given below:

IN* the beginning God created the heauen, and the Earth.

2 And the earth was without forme, and voyd, and darkenesse was vpon the face of the deepe: and the Spirit of God moued vpon the face of the waters.

3 And God said,* Let there be light: and there was light.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1558-1625)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Non-Dramatic Poetry	Reign of Elizabeth, 1558-1603
Edmund Spenser (1552-1599): Shepherd's Calendar (1579), Faerie Queene, etc.	
Sir Philip Sidney and the Sonneteers	
Chapman's Translation of Homer (1611)	Reign of James I, 1603-1625
Miscellaneous Lyrics	
II. The Drama	
First Regular Comedy, Ralph Roister Doister, 1553	
First Regular Tragedy, Gorboduc, about 1562	Drake sails around the World, 1577-80
Shakespeare's Predecessors: Peele, Greene, Lyly, Kyd	
Christopher Marlowe: Tamburlaine, Faustus, Jew of Malta, Edward II	
First Public Theater, 1576	Defeat of the Spanish Armada, 1588
William Shakespeare (1564-1616): Four Periods: "Apprenticeship" (1590-95), "Mastery" (1595-1600), "Tragic Gloom" (1600-08), "Serenity" (1608-12)	
First Folio Edition of Shakespeare's Plays, 1623	Act of Parliament against extreme Puritans ("Separatists"), 1593.
Ben Jonson (1573-1637)	
Closing of the Theaters, 1642	
III. Prose	
Lyly's Euphues, 1579	Settlement of Jamestown, Virginia, 1607
Sidney's Arcadia and Apology for Poesie	
Raleigh's History of the World, 1614	
Bacon's Essays, 1625	
King James ("Authorized Version") Bible, 1611	Pilgrims land at Plymouth, Mass., 1620

Flood Tide of the Renaissance; Vitality of the Age Shown in Discovery and Adventure; National Enthusiasm; Supremacy of the Drama in Literature

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Creighton's The Age of Elizabeth, Harrison's Elizabethan England, Goadby's The England of Shakespeare, Winter's Shakespeare's England, Stephenson's The Elizabethan People (Holt), Stephenson's Shakespeare's London (Holt), Shakespeare's London (Dutton), Froude's History of England (chapters on Mary Queen of Scots and the Armada).

Literary.—Seccombe & Allen's The Age of Shakespeare (Macmillan), Saintsbury's Elizabethan Literature (Macmillan), S. Lee's Great Englishmen of the Sixteenth Century (Scribners), Lives of Spenser, Sidney, Shakespeare, Bacon, in "English Men of Letters" Series, Edwards' Life of Raleigh (Macmillan), Gosse's Life of Raleigh ("English Worthies").

The Drama.—Manly's Specimens of the Pre-Shakespearean Drama (Ginn), Pollard's English Miracle Plays (Clarendon Press), Miracle and Morality Plays ("Everyman's Library"), Gayley's Representative English Comedies (Macmillan), Neilson's Chief Elizabethan Dramatists (Houghton), Thayer's Best Elizabethan Plays (Ginn), "Mermaid Series" of Elizabethan Dramatists (Scribners), Schelling's Elizabethan Drama, Brooke's The Tudor Drama, Boas' Shakespeare and his Predecessors, Lamb's Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Ward's History of English Dramatic Literature, Albright's The Elizabethan Stage.

Shakespeare.—Lee's Life of Shakespeare (Macmillan), Halliwell-Phillipps' Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare, Dowden's Shakspere—his Mind and Art, Baker's The Development of Shakespeare as a Dramatist, Moulton's Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist, Dowden's Shakspere Primer (American Book Co.), MacCracken's Introduction to Shakespeare (Macmillan), Luce's Handbook to Shakespeare's Works (Macmillan), Mabie's Shakespeare—Poet, Dramatist, and Man.—The Rolfe, Arden, Temple, and revised Hudson editions of single plays are excellent for class study.

CHAPTER SIX

THE PURITAN PERIOD

1625-1660

THE AGE OF MILTON

The Passing of the Elizabethans.—Elizabeth died in 1603, but the vitalizing forces of the great age which bears her name did not begin to wane until well on within the reign of her successor, James I. By the end of his reign in 1625 the best work of the Elizabethan writers is done and signs of changing ideals are evident: the high noon of the Renaissance is past. We have seen how the queen was the embodiment of the spirit of her age, unifying the nation in patriotic pride, appealing to the popular imagination, and imparting courage and hope. We have learned how the literature, particularly the drama, reflected the joy and splendor, the youthful buoyancy of the national life, making reality take on the colors of romance. Elizabethan England was a united and a merry England. Under James things were different: personally he was not popular, and politically he had such exalted views about the divine rights of kings that he could not get along with Parliament.

James's successor, Charles I, was still more extreme in his notions about divine rights, and as a result of his disregard of the rights of the people the nation was plunged into civil war, the king was beheaded, Cromwell became Protector, and the Puritans succeeded the Royalists in political control. The reign of Elizabeth had been one of peace and prosperity; the reigns of her successors were full of confusion, and the literature of the period reflects this unrest. We must not suppose, however, that there is any clear line of demarcation between the periods; they

overlap, the Elizabethan gradually giving place to a sterner, less romantic age. Several of the dramatists who were brought up in the "spacious days" lived on into these changed times, notably Ben Jonson, who died in 1637, the same year in which Milton's "Lycidas" appeared; but the playwright's occupation was gone, so fierce had grown the war of factions in Church and State. The nation, busied with more serious concerns, was in no mood for theatrical performances; civil strife promised real tragedy on a vaster stage; the clamorous protests of the Puritans silenced the makers of plays and jolly tavern songs. The day of the artificial lyric and the somber epic was at hand.

Puritanism.—Under Henry VIII England, it will be remembered, had become a Protestant country, partly for political reasons and partly as a result of the general influence of the great Protestant Reformation which began in Germany. There were many English Protestants, however, who were not satisfied with certain forms of worship and certain doctrines in the Church of England, regarding them as still too much like those of the Church of Rome. These people wished to purify the Church of such practices as, in their opinion, were not warranted by the teachings of the Bible. Moreover, with the Bible as their textbook, they were deeply interested in individual purity and individual salvation. These persons came to be known as Puritans. Puritanism, therefore, was in its beginnings a plea for greater individual righteousness on the one hand, and a protest against the formalism of the Church and the tyranny of church government on the other.

There were of course varying degrees of Puritanism, all the way from the extreme views held by those who actually separated themselves from the Established Church to the more cultured and tolerant attitude of those who remained in the Church and who wished to purify it from within. The extreme Puritan, from whom the popular conception of Puritanism has been derived, was austere and forbidding in manner, sanctimonious in speech, hostile to amusements,—an eccentric and somber individual, indeed, whose eyes were fixed on another world, who disapproved of dancing

and games, and who talked in Scriptural terms and sang psalms. This type of Puritan is not to be thought of as representing all of Puritanism; there were many moderate Puritans who did not leave the Church of England, who loved literature, and who showed their Puritanism by their insistence on personal righteousness and their advocacy of civil and religious liberty. As a whole, then, Puritanism was not so much a sect as an attitude of mind; toward liberal culture and intellectual freedom this attitude was one of narrowness, and in consequence vigorous artistic activity was repressed and the national life became hard and dry. By way of compensation, however, the nation was ennobled by the mighty struggle for civil and religious liberty. Freedom of conscience was gained even though literature did suffer a temporary eclipse.

Puritan and Cavalier.—The Puritans were the reformers, and the Cavaliers, or Royalists, were the conservatives. From a religious struggle the contest grew into a political one for possession of the government. The Puritans were extreme Protestants: some fled to Holland and America, where they set up a more democratic form of church polity; the great majority remained in England and sought to purify the Established Church, society, and politics. They opposed the king, finally got rid of him after much hard fighting in the field and in Parliament, and established the Commonwealth, which lasted until 1660. The leader and typical man of action among the Puritans was Oliver Cromwell; in literature they were most conspicuously represented by John Milton and John Bunyan, though Milton, as we shall see, was part Cavalier. The typical Puritan, as already stated, was stern, condemning the graces and gayeties of life, popular sports and games, as little less than mere vanities and vexations of the spirit. Because of their close-cropped hair the Puritans were nicknamed "Roundheads" in contradistinction to the Cavaliers who wore long hair falling down upon their shoulders. The Cavaliers stood for the established order: they were followers of the king and tolerant adherents of the Established Church; they enjoyed the world and the social refinements of life, its graces and pleas-

ures, its art and literature, and were in general more cultured and accomplished than their austere fellow countrymen.

In those disturbed times many of these Cavaliers came to America and settled in Virginia and adjacent regions along the Atlantic seaboard, while the Puritans settled in Massachusetts and neighboring parts of New England. It would be a mistake, however, to draw a rigid line between Puritan and Cavalier, for between the extremists in both parties there were multitudes of solid Englishmen who combined within themselves characteristics of both. Although Puritan influence was predominant between 1625 and 1660, probably not more than half of the people of England during those years were professedly Puritans. In our study of the literature of the period we shall see time and again a blending of the traits of the men of these two parties.

I. POETRY OF THE PURITAN PERIOD

It is not an easy task to classify the poets of the Puritan Period, so many are the subjects on which they wrote and so varied the treatment. Some of the later Elizabethan dramatists were still living in the earlier and even middle years of the period, but dramatic poetry naturally excited little interest in an age largely given to religious and political controversy and therefore essentially hostile to the drama. It accordingly seems preferable to consider the dramatists who were still writing in the reign of Charles I as really belonging to the preceding age—the last of the Elizabethans—rather than to assign them to a period of distinctly non-dramatic temper. Roughly speaking the poetry of the Puritan Period may be divided into Lyric and Epic; John Milton, who wrote both kinds, is the one supreme poet; the minor poets were for the most part lyrists. For greater convenience we may group these minor singers under three heads: (1) **The Spenserians,** or imitators of Edmund Spenser; (2) **The Metaphysical,** or Fantastic Poets; (3) **The Cavalier,** or Royalist Poets.

The Spenserian Poets.—There is a small group of poets belonging to the reigns of James I and Charles I whose verse in form

and content is suggestive of that of Edmund Spenser. These poets may be regarded as transitional,—connecting links between the non-dramatic poets of the Elizabethan Age and the less spontaneous singers of more artificial days when political and religious controversy chilled the genial current of English song. On the one hand, they sound the pastoral note of Spenser, and on the other, the dominant religious note of Puritanism. The foremost of these poets are Giles and Phineas Fletcher (cousins of the dramatist, John Fletcher), Browne, Drummond, and Wither.

The two brothers GILES and PHINEAS FLETCHER belonged to a poetic family; they were educated at Cambridge, became clergymen in the Established Church, and spent their lives in quiet parishes where they had leisure for reading and writing. Giles Fletcher's best work is *Christ's Victory and Triumph*, an epic poem in four parts in which the Spenserian stanza, modified by the omission of the seventh line, is used. The language and imagery of this poem reveal a strong Spenserian influence, though Fletcher at times attains a higher majesty and earnestness than we find in *The Faerie Queene*. *Christ's Victory and Triumph* is one of the most important religious poems in our literature before Milton; indeed, its influence upon Milton was considerable, for he studied it closely and made some use of certain passages from it in his *Paradise Regained*. Phineas Fletcher's principal work is *The Purple Island*. The name suggests a romantic spot far away in "perilous seas forlorn," but turns out to be the body of man (Isle of Man) anatomically and spiritually considered, with much ingenious allegory and fantastic imagery after the manner of Spenser.

WILLIAM BROWNE is the author of *Britannia's Pastorals*, a poem containing many beautiful descriptions of natural scenery, though much of the loose narrative has the conventional pastoral setting with nymphs and Arcadian shepherds as characters. Browne lived in Devonshire, one of the most charming parts of rural England, and his poetry sometimes reflects the sights and sounds of that delightful countryside.

WILLIAM DRUMMOND, of Hawthornden, scholar and recluse, lived a meditative life of retirement on his estate in Scotland, where Ben Jonson made him a famous visit. Drummond wrote Sonnets and Hymns of great artistic excellence, of which his *Sonnet to the Nightingale* is perhaps the best.

GEORGE WITHER is hard to classify: he was born in 1588 and died in 1667, and thus, it will be noted, saw the glory and decadence of the Elizabethans, the triumph of the Puritans, and the Restoration of the Royalists. He had a varied experience—at first a Royalist, then a Puritan, satirizing political and religious abuses, suffering in prison, and dying obscure and neglected. His work is a large body of quite uneven verse, much of it commonplace, parts of it noble in spirit and exquisite in finish. His secular lyrics combine Elizabethan spontaneity and Cavalier grace, while his religious hymns reveal the serious Puritan. The best known of Wither's lyrics is that of which the following is the first stanza:

Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die, because a woman's fair?
Or make pale my cheeks with care,
'Cause another's rosy are?
Be she fairer than the day,
Or the flowery meads in May!
If she be not so to me,
What care I how fair she be?

The Metaphysical Poets.—To another group of poets in this period, quite different in manner from those just considered, the term "metaphysical" was applied by Dr. Johnson because in their poetry they departed from the ordinary or natural mode of thought and expression, preferring abstruse philosophical language to the simple and direct. It would be more accurate to call them "fantastic," as Milton did, inasmuch as they delighted in strained and far-fetched comparisons, fanciful word-play, and sometimes in mere prettiness of phrase, caring more for eccentricity of expression than genuineness of feeling. These clever turns of phrase and ingenious fancies are called "conceits"; and

while they are often very striking, and sometimes even brilliant, they usually give to poetry an air of artificiality. The prevalence of "conceits" in poetry at this time reminds us of the popularity of that fantastic fashion in Elizabethan prose known as Euphuism.[1] The name "Metaphysical Poets" is sometimes applied to all lyric writers of the Puritan Period; it seems more natural, however, to include under this head only those whose verse is more distinctively philosophical and religious in tone, though it must be clearly understood that no rigid line can be drawn between the so-called Metaphysical Poets and the Cavalier Poets. The principal Metaphysical Poets are Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan, Marvell, Cowley, Waller.

John Donne.—One of the most original, versatile, vigorous, and whimsical of English poets was John Donne, who was born in London in 1573. Donne's father, a wealthy merchant, died when the future poet was a mere child, and he was left to the care of a devout Catholic mother. He early displayed a restless mental energy which led him into the study of a wide range of subjects; this study he continued with marked success at both Oxford and Cambridge. Then the Elizabethan passion for exploration seized him and he traveled in France, Italy, and Spain, and even to the Azores, part of the time with the army and at other times alone. He had studied science, law, and theology, giving most of his time to law. Returning to London, he made a clandestine marriage, was in serious financial straits, and finally, since political and other preferment had failed him, entered the ministry of the Established Church, having some time before virtually renounced the Catholic faith of his earlier youth. Donne was forty-two when he entered the Church; in six years he became Dean of St. Paul's, holding this position nine or ten years until his death in 1631, and was regarded as the foremost preacher of England. From a somewhat wild and irregular youth and early manhood Donne had so far advanced in public esteem that at his death he was reverenced almost as a saint. His early life was Elizabethan

[1] See footnote, page 112.

in its restless ambitions, but into his later years there stole the melancholy gloom of Puritanism.

Donne left a large body of verse, none of which was published until after his death, though much of it had circulated in manuscript during his lifetime among his admiring friends. In his poetry Donne broke away from the subjects and methods of the Elizabethans; there are no stock classic divinities, shepherds, nymphs, and Arcadian landscapes, as in Spenser; there is little regard for sweet-sounding lines and pleasing imagery. Donne drew his illustrations from science, law, theology, and metaphysics, subjects in which he had a keen personal interest. The Elizabethans had ransacked creation for the material of their verse; Donne, on the contrary, limited himself to his own experience for the inspiration and matter of his song. He wrote satires, elegies, love songs, religious poems, and various other kinds which defy classification. Donne is almost a great poet: he has vigor, originality, deep thought at times, and occasionally he rises into the sublime; but he lacks warmth of feeling, he is sometimes almost hopelessly obscure, he is given to overstrained figures, or "conceits," and to such whimsical tricks of meter that too often it is well-nigh impossible to keep track of the thought. Here, for instance, is his famous "conceit" of two lovers' souls, which is one of his best:

If they be two, they are two so
  As stiff twin compasses are two;
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show
  To move, but doth, if th' other do.

And though it in the centre sit,
  Yet when the other far doth roam,
It leans and hearkens after it,
And grows erect as that comes home.

The influence of the poetry of Donne upon that of his immediate successors was very marked; indeed, for a hundred years Donne was admired and imitated, Dryden and Pope being the most prominent among those indebted to him. Even to-day, when

Donne is little known except to scholars and lovers of the curious and quaint, a patient reading of his poems will arouse in one something of the admiration which his contemporaries felt for an original genius whose virile thought is, unhappily, oftentimes obscured in a cloud of fantastic imagery.

George Herbert.—More devotional in spirit and simpler in expression than Donne was George Herbert (1593–1633), serene and tranquil poet of genuine religious emotion. Born in Wales of aristocratic lineage, George Herbert was brought up by a devout and cultured mother, who sent him first to Westminster School, London, and then to Cambridge. He was educated for a career at court, but after waiting some years in vain for promised preferment, he entered the Church and devoted the rest of his life to religious service and deep meditation. In his little country parish, shut out from the troublous agitations of the larger world, Herbert communed with nature and with God, leaving a manuscript of poems in which, according to his own words, was to be found "a picture of the many spiritual conflicts that have passed betwixt God and my own soul." But the conflicts are not in the poems—all is calm and peaceful there. Herbert's work is arranged and named under the similitude of a church, or sacred temple, a poem or group of poems being assigned to parts of the building—the church porch, altar, windows, floor,—to the sacraments, religious festivals, abstract moral virtues, and the like. The volume of his poems, called collectively *The Temple*, is an interesting medley of moral and religious reflections expressed in the form of wise precepts, quaint conceits, and solemn hymns. Here are several precepts taken from the "Church Porch:"

Envy not greatness; for thou makest thereby
Thyself the worse, and so the distance greater.

Be calm in arguing: for fierceness makes
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy.

Dare to be true. Nothing can need a lie;
A fault, which needs it most, grows two thereby.

By all means use sometimes to be alone;
Salute thyself: see what thy soul doth wear.

The poem of Herbert's most frequently quoted to-day is the one beginning—

> Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,
> The bridal of the earth and sky!

His verse has a subdued musical quality quite in contrast to the crabbed harshness of much of the verse of his master Donne, but Herbert is Donne's faithful disciple in the matter of conceit-making. As a whole, the poetry of Herbert breathes the joyous contentment of a serene and beautiful spirit, free from passion and sincerely concerned with the daily duties of religious service.

Herbert's most noteworthy disciple is HENRY VAUGHAN, a country physician of Wales, who saw the Divine in nature and in childhood as well as in the forms of religion. There are passages in the poems of Vaughan which suggest Wordsworth.

Crashaw, Cowley, Waller.—Another disciple of Herbert was Richard Crashaw (1613-1650), who is also akin to Donne in his fondness for ingenious conceits. Crashaw was first a Protestant, but his reading and study at Cambridge led him into Catholicism, for which he had by nature a strong affinity. Because of this change of religious views he was compelled to leave Cambridge and England, as the Cromwellian powers were hostile to him. He fled to Paris and there lived in poverty until his fellow poet Cowley introduced him to the queen of Charles I, who had herself gone to France because of troubled conditions at home; and through her influence Crashaw was given a place in an Italian monastery. He died in Italy the year after his arrival there. Crashaw's poetry is much more impassioned and mystical than Herbert's and consequently more uneven; now and then he rises to almost Miltonian heights when he sings of divine love with the ecstasy of a lover for his earthly mistress; again, and all too often, he lingers in the frigid zone of clever quibbling. He is at his best in "The Flaming Heart," an enraptured tribute to Saint Theresa ("O thou undaunted daughter of desires!"), and in his "Description of a Religious House" which closes with these luminous lines:

The self-remembering soul sweetly recovers
Her kindred with the stars; not basely hovers
Below: but meditates her immortal way
Home to the original source of Light and intellectual day.

Abraham Cowley (1618-1667) enjoyed an immense reputation in his own day: at Cambridge he was regarded as a poetic wonder; he was learned both in the sciences and in literature. All this, however, did not save him to posterity. His lack of thought and passion and his extreme conceitfulness account for the rapid decay of interest in most of his work during the next generation. His two touching and eloquent poems, "On the Death of Mr. William Hervey" and "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw," still hold a high place in seventeenth-century verse. Cowley's greatest achievement outside of his prose essays is to be found in his *Pindaric Odes*, a poetic form which he loosely adapted from the Greek poet Pindar and which was exceedingly popular with English poets down to the time of Thomas Gray.

Edmund Waller (1605-1687) was in his own day second only in fame to Cowley; he is remembered to-day as the author of several graceful lyrics, chief among which are the lines, "On a Girdle," and the song, "To a Rose," of which the first stanza is as follows:

Go, lovely Rose,
Tell her that wastes her time and me,
That now she knows,
When I resemble her to thee,
How sweet and fair she seems to be.

Waller's most notable contribution, however, is the polished rhyming couplet, commonly known as the "heroic couplet," which reached artistic perfection in the verse of Alexander Pope in the next century. This form of verse had, of course, been in use since the days of Chaucer, but Waller gave it such precision, such finish and regularity, that henceforth it was practically a

new instrument ready for the more brilliant wit of Dryden and Pope, the masters of classicism. The following lines from "His Majesty's Escape at St. Andrews" will serve to illustrate Waller's use of the heroic couplet:

> He rent the crown from vanquished Henry's head,
> Raised the white rose, and trampled on the red,
> Till love triumphing o'er the victor's pride,
> Brought Mars and Warwick to the conquered side.

Marvell.—Andrew Marvell (1621–1678), Milton's friend and assistant when Latin Secretary to Cromwell, may be regarded as a connecting link between this group of poets and Milton; indeed, so varied is Marvell's verse that it reveals something of the manner of Spenser, of Donne, of the Cavalier lyrists, and of Milton himself. Marvell's earlier poetry shows a romantic appreciation of nature quite unusual in the seventeenth century, while his "Ode to Cromwell" and his tribute to *Paradise Lost* are characterized by dignity and noble restraint.

The Cavalier Poets.—Along with the poets just considered there flourished a little group of singers who voiced in graceful lyrics the less serious impulses of the age. They were Royalist in their sympathies and shared the declining fortunes of the court, treating with lofty scorn the solemn Puritans. Recklessly loyal to their king and gallantly worshipful of woman, the Cavalier poets were a dashing band of pleasure-loving gentlemen who cared little for political strife and religious controversy, preferring, as Milton says,

> To sport with Amaryllis in the shade
> Or with the tangles of Neaera's hair.

Their most characteristic writing is the courtly amorous poetry, dainty, gay, and trivial. On the one hand, they touch the Elizabethan lyric, that spontaneous outburst of song when the English garden was all ablaze with bloom, and on the other, the formal Restoration poetry, when English song had been chilled by the

breath of Classicism. Yet in spite of its general artificiality the Cavalier lyric is an exquisite product: some of these songs are among the most charming light poems in our language, as appealing as the simple freshness of childhood and spring flowers, full of careless rapture and pastoral sweetness, and all the better for the faint undertone of sadness. The most typical of the Cavalier poets are Carew, Lovelace, Suckling, and Herrick. CAREW is the earliest of these singers and helps to connect the Elizabethan and Puritan periods; the delicacy of his artistic form may be seen in the following stanzas from his best known lyric:

Ask me no more where Jove bestows,
When June is past, the fading rose,
For in your beauty's orient deep
These flowers, as in their causes, sleep.

Ask me no more whither do stray
The golden atoms of the day,
For, in pure love, heaven did prepare
Those powders to enrich your hair.

Ask me no more whither doth haste
The nightingale when May is past,
For in your sweet dividing throat
She winters and keeps warm her note.

LOVELACE and SUCKLING are usually mentioned together because of their social accomplishments, their adventurous careers, and their tragic deaths: Lovelace was handsome and of engaging manners, was born to wealth and station, but suffered imprisonment, and died in abject poverty; Suckling was a gentleman of fortune, a courtier and a soldier, who wandered through France, Italy, Spain, and Germany seeking adventure, was tortured by the Spanish Inquisition, and finally committed suicide in Paris. Such, in a sentence, were the romantic lives of these two typical Cavaliers, whose verses carelessly thrown off have kept their names from perishing. Lovelace left two beautiful little poems, "Going to the Wars," and "To Althea in Prison": from the first

is taken this stanza, an apology to his lady-love for leaving her and going to war—

Yet this inconstancy is such
As you too shall adore,—
I could not love thee, dear, so much,
Loved I not honour more;

and from the second these familiar lines—

Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for an heritage;
If I have freedom in my love
And in my soul am free,
Angels alone, that soar above,
Enjoy such liberty.

Suckling's most captivating lyric is this address to a disconsolate lover:

Why so pale and wan, fond lover?
Prithee, why so pale?
Will, when looking well can't move her,
Looking ill prevail?
Prithee, why so pale?

Why so dull and mute, young sinner?
Prithee, why so mute?
Will, when speaking well can't win her,
Saying nothing do't?
Prithee, why so mute?

Quit, quit, for shame! This will not move;
This cannot take her.
If of herself she will not love,
Nothing can make her:
The devil take her!

The chief of the Cavalier group is Robert Herrick, whom we shall consider at greater length.

Robert Herrick (1591–1664).—Herrick was born in London, studied at Cambridge, entered the Church, was given a vicarage in Devonshire by Charles I in 1629; from this he was ejected by the Puritan government in 1647, but returned in 1662, having spent the intervening years in London. In early life Herrick was intimate with Ben Jonson and his circle, and came to regard himself as one of the "sons of Ben." The most productive years of his life were spent in the country parsonage amid the charming scenery of Devonshire; here he kept his pet animals—a dog, a cat, a lamb, a goose, and a favorite pig,—watched the simple sports of his neighbors, cultivated his flower garden, wrote a sermon once a week for a few drowsy parishioners, and composed poetry. In 1648 he published a collection of his poems, over twelve hundred, under the general title of *Hesperides and Noble Numbers*, the latter name having reference to his religious verse. The *Hesperides* contains the best of Herrick's poetry, the subjects of which he announces at the very beginning of the volume:

I sing of brooks, of blossoms, birds and bowers,
Of April, May, of June, and July-flowers;
I sing of may-poles, hock-carts, wassails, wakes,
Of bridegrooms, brides, and of their bridal-cakes;
I write of youth, of love, and have access
By these, to sing of cleanly wantonness;
I sing of dews, of rains, and piece by piece,
Of balm, of oil, of spice, and amber-greece;
I sing of times trans-shifting; and I write
How roses first came red, and lilies white.
I write of groves, of twilights, and I sing
The court of Mab and of the Fairie King.
I write of Hell; I sing, and ever shall,
Of Heaven, and hope to have it after all.

Such is the varied matter of Herrick's song. He was more fortunate than his fellow-poets in his twenty years of undisturbed quiet in the country, where he could take his time to work out his poems as a true artist; and consequently we have from him, among the lighter singers of the period, the most satisfying achievement both in substance and form. He had read in one

way or another, we may be sure, the best lyric poets of Greece and Rome—Theocritus, Martial, Catullus—and from them gained a clearer sense of form and the value of artistic restraint; and then, too, he had sat at the feet of rare Ben Jonson, himself no mean classicist. But above all, Herrick drew his inspiration from green fields, fragrant gardens, country lanes, and the doings of rural folk unspoiled by the artificial life of city and court. We find in his poetry, therefore, a freshness and a naturalness which we sadly miss in the other Cavalier singers. His primroses are indeed "filled with morning dew," his daffodils we would not willingly part with, his rosebuds we fain would gather too, and when "Corinna Goes a-Maying" we would get up early and go along with her. All this may be very trivial as compared with the sterner issues of a time that tried men's souls; still, it is one side of life and not to be despised, even when we are about to turn our thoughts towards the great figure of that lonely Puritan, John Milton, whose "soul was like a star and dwelt apart."

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674)

O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies,
O skilled to sing of time or eternity,
God-gifted organ-voice of England,
Milton, a name to resound for ages.

—*Tennyson.*

His Life.—John Milton was born five years after Elizabeth died, eight years before Shakespeare died, just as Ben Jonson was becoming famous, and in the lifetime of Bacon and Raleigh; the year before his birth Captain John Smith had founded Jamestown, Virginia, and twelve years afterward the Pilgrims landed in New England; three years after he was born the King James Bible appeared. Milton came into the world, therefore, at a time when great men and great movements were occupying the public mind. He was in a sense a belated Elizabethan, but he did not look backward; rather, with prophetic instinct he threw himself into the coming conflict.

Milton's life may for convenience be divided into four periods: (1) Youth and Education (1608-1632); (2) Horton and Travels (1632-1640); (3) Politics and Prose (1640-1660); (4) Retirement (1660-1674).

Youth and Education: London and Cambridge. John Milton was born in Bread Street in the heart of London on December 9, 1608. In the same

street not far away was the famous Mermaid Tavern where Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and their fellows had many a merry meeting, and very likely little John Milton often saw them pass his father's door. Milton's father was a scrivener,—that is, one whose business was the writing of deeds, contracts, wills and the like. He was a prosperous man, able to give his son excellent cultural advantages, loving books and music and himself a musician and composer of some note. From him Milton acquired a fondness for music and art which became the foundation of his literary greatness. In the midst of London the boy spent the first sixteen years of his life. After receiving private instruction from a Mr. Young, Milton attended St. Paul's School for five years (1620-1625), studying there Latin, Greek, and very likely Italian, French, and Hebrew; here, besides, he formed a lasting friendship with Charles Diodati. Milton was a diligent, even a consecrated, student, as the following words from one of his prose works (*Defensio Secunda*) prove:

"My father destined me while yet a little boy for the study of humane letters, which I seized with such eagerness that from the twelfth year of my age I scarcely ever went from my lessons to bed before midnight; which indeed was the first cause of injury to my eyes, to whose natural weakness there were also added frequent headaches."

In 1625 Milton entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where he spent seven years, taking his B. A. degree in 1629 and his M. A. in 1632. His rooms are still pointed out to visitors, and so is the ancient mulberry-tree in the beautiful gardens of Christ's College which tradition says Milton planted. The years at Cambridge University were devoted to hard study and the writing of poems in Latin and English; the beauty of the old university town and its surroundings made a deep impression upon Milton's sensitive soul, especially the river Cam, of which he speaks in "Lycidas:"

> Next Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
> His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge
> Inwrought with figures dim.

While at Cambridge he composed many college exercises in Latin, poems of no very great value except as earnest of higher things; but he wrote in 1629, when he was twenty-one, an "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," his first important poem; two years later he wrote a sonnet, "On Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three," in which he solemnly dedicated himself to the service of God and man. The next year he announced to his father in the Latin poem, "Ad Patrem," that he had chosen poetry as his vocation. At Cambridge Milton was noted for the strength and beauty of his character, his handsome face, and his serious devotion to learning.

JOHN MILTON

Life at Horton and his Travels. From Cambridge Milton went to live with his father, now retired from business, at the village of Horton in Buckinghamshire eighteen or twenty miles from London. This is one of the most attractive country districts in England; its fertile meadows are well watered by glinting streamlets flowing into the Colne and the Thames and shaded by stately oaks and beeches; in sight are the towers of Windsor Castle, "bosomed high in tufted trees," and Eton, one of the most famous schools of England, near the winding Thames. Here Milton spent nearly six years, reading the Latin and Greek authors and dreaming beside still waters and in green pastures. His father had expected that his gifted son would enter the Church or perhaps study law; and indeed Milton had in turn thought of each of these professions, only to decide more firmly to follow the bent of his genius toward poetry. His father wisely acquiesced in this decision and encouraged him in his fuller preparation for his high calling. During these Horton years the so-called *Minor Poems* were written—"L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Arcades," "Comus,"and "Lycidas." Meanwhile the young poet had made the acquaintance of the eminent musician Henry Lawes and of Sir Henry Wotton, head of Eton, both of whom generously befriended him, the first in helping to present "Comus," and the second in giving him letters of introduction to eminent men on the continent.

In the spring of 1638 Milton set out for Italy, the home of poets and artists and the literary storehouse of antiquity, whither for some time his thoughts had been turning as to a land of heart's desire. He went first to Paris, where he met Grotius, the great Dutch scholar and philosopher; thence he journeyed by way of Genoa and Pisa to Florence, the fair "lily of the Arno," with its memories of Dante, Savonarola, and Michael Angelo. So cordial a welcome awaited him there from a large circle of congenial spirits that he remained two months, meeting the blind old astronomer Galileo, who was in prison for daring to think for himself. At Naples he learned of the disturbed conditions in England—war had broken out between the Scotch Covenanters and Charles I—and decided to return home. Milton returned after an absence of fifteen or sixteen months to find his country on the verge of civil war; the Horton home was soon broken up and he and his father moved back to London where in hired lodgings Milton for the next few years divided his time between teaching his two nephews, along with several other pupils, and planning a great poem on a lofty theme. The Italian journey was the richest artistic experience of his life, which for the next twenty years was destined to be troubled by civil and religious controversy.

Politics and Prose. Between the years 1640 and 1660 Milton gave himself almost entirely to the writing of prose pamphlets on matters of Church and State. In the heated controversy between the Royalists, or Church

party, and the Parliamentarians, or Puritans, Milton was led by his passionate love of liberty to side with the Parliamentarians; but Milton was not an extreme Puritan and never formally separated himself from the Established Church. He joined the Puritan party because to him it stood for purity and liberty in a time of religious and civil tyranny; at heart Milton was an independent. His first five pamphlets were devoted to a discussion of church government.

In 1643, the year following the outbreak of the great Civil War between the king and Parliament, Milton married Mary Powell, daughter of a Royalist; as was to be expected, they did not live happily together, for she was young and socially inclined, while her husband was twice as old and given to severe studies and the simple life. Finally reconciled, however, after a year or two of separation they dwelt together in peace until Mary Milton's death in 1653. Milton's other two marriages were attended with greater happiness. Out of his first ill-starred union grew a series of tracts on marriage and divorce which, like most of his controversial pamphlets, are not very pleasant reading to-day. Following these, however, are two notable utterances, a letter on *Education*, addressed to Samuel Hartlib, and the pamphlet on the freedom of the press, the *Areopagitica; a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing.* The *Areopagitica* is one of the noblest defenses of free speech ever penned and should be read by every one who would know the real greatness of John Milton. His views on education are surprisingly modern. Among the later pamphlets—the series growing out of Milton's defense of the execution of Charles I in 1649—the one of most interest to-day is the *Defensio Secunda,* because in it Milton gives an account of his own youth and noble ambitions.

In 1652 Milton became totally blind, the result of long years of constant reading and study begun, as we have seen, in his early boyhood. Three years before this Milton had been appointed Secretary for Foreign Tongues under Cromwell's Government, his duties being the writing of letters, addresses, and defenses in the Latin language to foreign states. He held this official position until the end of the Commonwealth in 1660, when the Restoration of the monarchy took place and the voice of the Puritan was stilled. During all these twenty years of controversy his poetic product was a handful of sonnets.

Retirement. After years of strife and sorrow at last came peace to the blind and battle-scarred poet. It is a wonder he was not hanged by the returning Royalists; he was arrested, detained for a short while until he paid a fine, and then released; his blindness, his comparative unimportance politically, and a traditional respect for poetic genius, may be regarded as the principal causes of his escape. The fourteen remaining years of his life were spent in quiet retirement mostly in the neighborhood of Bunhill Fields, London, where in a modest house given over to plain living and on his part

to high thinking, he received his friends and dictated his greatest poems, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*. Here on November 8, 1674, Milton died, and a few days later his body, followed by "all his learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar," was buried in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate.

His Personality.—Milton was of medium height, of unusually fair complexion in his early manhood, had dark gray eyes, and auburn hair falling on his shoulders, and an oval face of such delicacy of expression that at Cambridge he was nicknamed the "Lady of Christ's." But Milton never was effeminate; he was one of the most fearless of men in the utterance of his convictions; he had an erect and manly bearing, and he was a good fencer. From his youth up he felt himself set apart for higher things, and this inner consciousness of dedication to some sacred task held him somewhat aloof from the crowd, so that it would not be easy to picture Milton among the genial company at the Mermaid. Neither his training nor his temperament led him along the primrose path of dalliance; his young feet wandered in very different ways, as he himself tells us:

> I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem, that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things; not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men, or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy.

Such was Milton's lofty conception of what a poet should be, and this he strove to realize within himself. The man Milton is in truth as interesting and morally worthy as the poet Milton, and his life itself was almost an epic poem in its high seriousness, its conflicts, and its consecration to duty, while in the cause of liberty of mind and conscience he was a fighter as doughty as Cromwell, along with whom he looms large above the other figures of his day. His purity of life, his loftiness of character, his passionate devotion to duty, his love of beauty, his culture and his enthusiasm for knightly ideals, go to prove that in the Puritan there was much of the Cavalier.

His Works.—Milton's literary activity divides itself into three well defined periods: (1) **Earlier,** or **Lyric,** including "Ode on the Nativity," "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," "Lycidas," and other shorter poems; (2) **Middle,** or **Prose,** including *Areopagitica* and various controversial pamphlets, and most of the Sonnets; (3) **Later,** or **Epic,** including *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and the drama *Samson Agonistes*.

The Early or so-called Minor Poems (1629-1637). The first important poem of Milton is the "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," written in 1629 at the age of twenty-one while he was at Cambridge. It is really a solemn hymn chanting the beginning of the reign of the Prince of Peace before whose coming the pagan gods and their oracles are dumb. The poem shows a slight Spenserian influence in the introductory stanzas, but soon changes into a newer harmony distinctly Miltonian. The next year the well-known lines "On Shakespeare" were written, and two years later were prefixed to the Second Folio of Shakespeare's plays. Then came the famous group composed while Milton was living at Horton—"L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso," "Comus," "Lycidas." The first two are lyric and descriptive companion pieces, each reflecting a different mood of the same person. "L'Allegro" is the joyous, mirthful man whose imagination revels in country sights and sounds from morn till eve, flies to "towered cities" and the "well-trod stage," and finally is lulled to rest by "soft Lydian airs." "Il Penseroso" is the pensive man whose fancy dwells on the quieter scenes and more subdued sounds of evening and the moonlight night vocal with nightingales, preferring even in the morning hours retired haunts by "waters murmuring" and the "dim religious light" of some cathedral. Each poem is a series of pictures in perfect harmony with the respective moods and presented with fine lyric effect. It is easy to see that of the two, "Il Penseroso" is in general more nearly akin to Milton's temperament, and it is worth noting that the poem closes with an allusion to some nobler achievement which the poet is meditating, when "old experience" may attain—

> To something like prophetic strain.

"Comus" was written in 1634, and was acted the same year at Ludlow Castle in honor of the Earl of Bridgewater, a prominent nobleman who had been recently made President of Wales. Milton's friend Henry Lawes wrote the music for the songs and took the part of the Attendant Spirit, and Milton may have been present at the performance. "Comus" is a masque, or musical drama designed for presentation on some special occasion before a royal or noble personage, and as such it does not require the action and variety of a popular play. The plot of "Comus" is quite simple: two brothers and a sister lose their way in a forest; the sister becoming separated from them falls into the hands of Comus, a base magician, who leads her into the midst of his circle of brutish companions with the intention of transforming her into their likeness; she resists and is rescued in the nick of time by her brothers, guided hither by the Attendant Spirit. The main interest of "Comus," however, is not dramatic but poetic and moral, for in it are stretches of singularly sweet and serious blank verse and several exquisite lyrics. The theme of "Comus" is the triumph of virtue over the appeal of the senses. In this poem Milton for the first time strikes that clear note of high distinction which gives such music and stateliness to his later poetry.

"Lycidas" was written in 1637 as a tribute to Edward King, a college friend of Milton's who had been drowned in the Irish Sea in the summer of that year. Milton's poem appeared in a memorial volume to King made up of contributions from various admirers. "Lycidas" is a pastoral poem, an elegy, in which Milton under the guise of a shepherd bewails the loss of his friend represented as another shepherd. The classical imagery is varied by the introduction of thinly veiled English scenes and characters connected with the experience and thought of Milton and his dead friend, the most famous allusions being to their *alma mater*, Cambridge, and the "corrupted clergy" of the time. After a sort of apology for violating his determination to write no more poetry until he should be ready to speak out on the lofty epic theme which he had in mind, and after an invocation to the Muses, Milton begins the lament proper, or monody, which rises from

tender reminiscence on through depression of spirit to final triumph at the thought of the dead shepherd's immortality and influence. The poem closes with an epilogue in which the singer of this pastoral lay announces that he will turn—

To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

The strict unity of this wonderful elegy is somewhat broken, of course, by the attack on the hirelings in the Church, but the poem gains in moral intensity thereby and becomes more characteristically Miltonian. "Lycidas" is one of the greatest of that line of elegies from Spenser's "Astrophel" to Tennyson's *In Memoriam* by which our poetry has been so spiritually enriched. Considered purely as poetry, it is one of the most exquisitely harmonious utterances in all literature.

Middle Period: Prose and Sonnets. Milton wrote something like twenty-five pamphlets on civil and religious themes, mostly controversial, between 1640 and 1660, but these as a whole are of little interest to-day except to special students of Milton. The *Areopagitica*, of which mention has already been made, is a noble piece of impassioned prose rising in certain places where literature is touched upon into a strain of lofty eloquence. This most literary of Milton's prose works was occasioned by the passage of a bill by Parliament for a stricter censorship over the press in general so that no unlicensed or unregistered book might be published. The *Areopagitica* is an address to Parliament protesting against this measure; and while it was not actually delivered, it nevertheless had a wholesome influence on public opinion toward greater freedom of thought. The name was suggested to Milton by a speech of one of the old Greek orators before the Areopagus, or Great Council of Athens, which met on the "Hill of Ares" (in Greek, *Areopagos*), or Mars' Hill. Here are several memorable sentences from the *Areopagitica:*

Books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a potency of life in them to be as active as that soul was whose progeny they are; nay, they do preserve as in a vial the purest efficacy and extraction of that living intel-

lect that bred them. . . . . As good almost kill a man as kill a good book: who kills a man kills a reasonable creature; but he who destroys a good book, kills reason itself, kills the image of God, as it were in the eye. Many a man lives a burden to the earth, but a good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

The *Sonnets* number twenty-three, including several in Italian, and most of them belong to the twenty years of the political and prose period. Several are addressed to women, some are political and patriotic, several celebrate the virtues of friends and great leaders, and others are purely personal. The personal sonnets, "On Having Arrived at the Age of Twenty-three" and "On His Blindness," are like solemn hymns of consecration and resignation; that "On the Late Massacre in Piedmont" and the one "To the Lord General Cromwell" are like prayers in the form of patriotic chants; the youthful sonnet "To the Nightingale," beginning,—

> O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray
> Warblest at eve when all the woods are still,—

is the most romantic in tone. Milton's sonnets reflect the high moral seriousness of a patriotic and prophetic nature in which a love of the beautiful is happily combined with an almost austere devotion to duty. Milton used the Italian form of sonnet—an octave made up of two quatrains and a sextet composed of two tercets—differing from the Shakespearean sonnet already described. The following typical sonnet, "On his Blindness," will serve to illustrate both the structure and literary quality of this poetic form as employed by Milton:

> When I consider how my light is spent
> Ere half my days in this dark world and wide,
> And that one talent which is death to hide
> Lodged with me useless, though my soul more bent
> To serve therewith my Maker, and present
> My true account, lest He returning chide;
> "Doth God exact day-labor, light denied?"

I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts. Who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best. His state
Is kingly: thousands at his bidding speed,
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait."

The Later Poems. As far back as the Cambridge days Milton had vaguely contemplated the writing of a great poem of dramatic or epic nature on some vast theme of national or religious import. For a while the story of King Arthur appealed to him, but this was given up in favor of a Biblical subject as better suited to his own temperament and at the same time as likely to be of more general interest. The first sketch of *Paradise Lost*, conceived as a drama, was made between 1640 and 1642; then came the Civil War and the strenuous years of controversy, and the draft of the great Scriptural Drama was laid aside. Not until 1658 did Milton actually begin work on *Paradise Lost*, by this time projected as an epic poem. The composition of it occupied the next six or seven years, though it was not published until 1667, when it appeared in ten books, the division into twelve books being made in the second edition, issued in 1674, the year of Milton's death. Milton, it will be remembered, became totally blind in 1652, and consequently *Paradise Lost* and the other later poems were dictated to an amanuensis—one of the poet's daughters, his wife, or some kinsman or friend. We are told that he composed most easily during the autumn, winter, and early spring; that he dictated from his easy chair or in bed, ringing when poetic inspiration seized him for his daughter to take down his verses, which flowed in rapid succession. The reader of the wonderful poetry of *Paradise Lost* should bear in mind that Milton *spoke* these lines, actually testing by the ear their musical quality —a test, by the way, which should be applied to all poetry and in particular to the verse of Milton.

Paradise Lost is an epic poem in twelve books, belonging to that kind of poetry which includes Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*,

Paradiſe loſt.

A

POEM

Written in

TEN BOOKS

By *JOHN MILTON.*

Licenſed and Entred according to Order.

LONDON

Printed, and are to be ſold by *Peter Parker* under *Creed* Church neer *Aldgate*; And by *Robert Boulter* at the *Turks Head* in *Biſhopſgate-ſtreet*; And *Matthias Walker*, under St. *Dunſtons* Church in *Fleet-ſtreet*, 1667.

FACSIMILE OF FIRST PAGE OF FIRST EDITION OF *PARADISE LOST*

Virgil's *Aeneid*, and our own *Beowulf*. An epic may in general be defined as a narrative poem of elevated character on some great and noble theme of racial or national interest. The central theme of *Paradise Lost* is the Fall of Man, its causes, attendant circumstances, and results; the definitely announced purpose of the poet is to—

> assert Eternal Providence,
> And justify the ways of God to men.

But Milton wanders far afield, embraces within the range of his vision the Universe of Heaven, Hell, Chaos, the Earth, and all the Planets, so that the "loss of Eden" is of minor imaginative interest and the purely theological part the least sustained.

The poem opens with a marvelous picture of Satan and his host of rebellious angels just awaking to consciousness after a nine days' stupor on the fiery lake of Hell following a nine days' fall from the battlements of Heaven; picture after picture follows—Satan arousing his bold compeers, the ringing appeals, the marshaling of the multitudes of fallen angels, the Debate in Hell, the final resolution to send Satan on his perilous journey to the newly created Earth for the ruin of Man. Throughout these first two books Satan is the dominating figure, the majestic Archangel with glory dimmed but of unconquerable will. The third book is concerned with the Council in Heaven, at which the Father announces his gracious purposes toward man and the Son his sacrifice, and with Satan's approach to Earth. The fourth book introduces Adam and Eve, tells of Satan's entrance to Paradise, his detection by the guarding Angel and temporary departure. Books five, six, seven, and eight are taken up with the Archangel's visit to Adam and Eve, his account of the war in Heaven, the creation, God's purposes, and a repeated warning against Satan. Book nine relates the temptation of Eve by Satan in the form of a serpent, her fall and Adam's; books ten and eleven have to do with Satan's return and God's announcement of Satan's ultimate overthrow and Man's victory through the Son. In the twelfth book the banishment, not without hope, of Adam and Eve is the last scene of this eventful story:

> In either hand the hastening Angel caught
> Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
> Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
> To the subjected plain—then disappeared.

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand and hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

In the first two books Milton's imagination reaches its highest flight; Satan is the heroic protagonist whose splendid courage in defeat excites admiration and suggests the careers of certain great warriors who fought against overwhelming odds; involuntarily our sympathies are with him as no doubt Milton's were for the moment. Then Satan degenerates into the cunning serpent and we turn against him as did his own companions even when he returned from that seductive enterprise in Eden. After the first two books the interest is not so evenly and thrillingly maintained; long stretches of theological exposition chill the current, which happily gets free ever and anon to flow mazily murmuring through "bowery loneliness and bloom profuse." The style is always lofty, the verse is always an echo of the sense: low things are lifted up out of the trivial and given such distinction and dignity that we admire sometimes against our judgment; our ear is taken captive by the majesty or lyric sweetness of the lines. No other poem in our literature is so spacious, so full of sustained splendor in the treatment of high themes and of solemn beauty in picturing quieter scenes and personal sorrows. One word alone fitly describes the nobility and elevation of this supreme epic poem of our literature, the word "sublime," which by common consent belongs to Milton's masterpiece.

Paradise Regained is a sort of sequel to the greater epic, being the result, it is said, of a suggestion of Milton's Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood, to whom the poet had submitted for reading the manuscript of *Paradise Lost*, that he should write a "Paradise Found." Milton accordingly set to work and within a year *Paradise Regained* was finished. This was in 1666, immediately

following the completion of *Paradise Lost*; *Paradise Regained* was published, along with *Samson Agonistes*, in 1671. *Paradise Regained* is in four books, and the central theme, to which Milton closely confines himself, is the Temptation of Christ in the Wilderness. As in the first great temptation by Satan mankind fell through Adam's disobedience, in the second great temptation by Satan mankind triumphs through Christ's victory over Satan: this is the conception worked out by Milton in *Paradise Regained*. The latter poem is distinctly inferior to the first in vigor, range, and elevation. *Paradise Regained* was more hastily composed; Milton was no doubt somewhat weary after the long strain of *Paradise Lost*. He was cramped, moreover, by the historical requirements and the comparative nearness of the theme, which was, besides, too much like that of his other epic to be handled with freshness; the wonder is, indeed, that *Paradise Regained* shows so much power and beauty.

Samson Agonistes, composed about 1667 and published in 1671, is a dramatic poem after the model of an old Greek tragedy, the last utterance of the great Puritan poet. Next to *Paradise Lost* this is the noblest of the works of Milton, and as an expression of his personal sentiments in his retirement after the din of conflict it is the most significant of his poems. *Samson Agonistes* (the "athlete," or "wrestler") sets forth with all the restraint, dignity, and regard for the classic unities which characterize a Greek play, the suffering and death of Samson, blind and in prison among his enemies, the Philistines. As we read this great drama, epic in its stately seriousness and largeness, we are time and again reminded of Milton's own conflicts: he like Samson was blind and living under the rule of the royalist Cavaliers, the Philistines, against whom he had fought with all his might; he too had chosen a wife from among his enemies and had bitterly suffered; he was lonely in his old age, an object of distrust or indifference to the "politician lords" around the king. *Samson Agonistes*, then, is in a sense an allegory of captive Puritanism in the England of the Restoration, and the old blind poet is thinly veiled under the guise of Samson.

Characteristics and Contribution.—We are impressed, first of all, with the moral nobility of the man and the poet, his lofty purity and his steadfast devotion to duty. His love of beauty, his fondness for classical allusion even in the midst of his Biblical settings and personages, his love of British folk-lore, and the graceful lyric quality of his minor poems, show how much of the classicist and the romantic Cavalier was mingled with the sterner Puritan. Milton's passionate defense of liberty, his independence of thought, his fidelity to conscience, and his eagerness to serve his country, show how true a patriot he was, how genuinely Anglo-Saxon at heart.

In life as in art Milton was a lyric and epic poet, not a dramatist; he could not detach himself from his poetry, as Shakespeare did when he made his plays. Milton puts his own personal opinions and characteristics into his works to such an extent that we may construct an autobiography from them; this we could not do for the dramatic master of the Elizabethans. As compared with Shakespeare Milton seems remote and cold, wanting in sympathy with human nature and the passions that sway the daily lives of men; indeed, the subject matter and the people of his poems are not the men and women we see and know. If Shakespeare is the poet of Man, Milton is the poet of Angels, flaming Cherubim and Seraphim, toward whose high estate man continually aspires; and Milton for his vision of other worlds and his wondrous "faculty divine" takes his place with the great epic poets of the ages, Homer, Virgil, Dante. Into our own literature he brought a stateliness and sublimity, a spaciousness and a sustained grandeur, which have enriched our speech and ennobled our imagination. Blank verse, to which Marlowe first gave distinction and which Shakespeare sounded from the "lowest note to the top of the compass," Milton perfected as an instrument of infinite range and highest harmony.

II. PROSE OF THE PURITAN PERIOD

During this period there is a noteworthy development of English prose both in style and subject matter. Up to this time, as

we have seen, prose lacked definiteness of form, inclining on the one hand to become fantastic, or Euphuistic, and on the other to be involved and incoherent. While this latter tendency is still manifest in the long Latinistic sentences of the prose writers of the earlier Puritan Period, a simpler style is slowly shaping itself out of the political and religious controversies in which writers and speakers were having considerable practice and in which clearness of expression was a positive virtue. Moreover, newer and more concrete subjects of literary interest meant a more direct and vital style; such matters, for instance, as science, philosophy, history, biography, sermons, and tracts for popular reading. We have already noted how clearly and pithily Bacon expressed himself in his essays and what strong, simple prose was employed in the King James Bible. Undoubtedly this model of virile prose was gradually exerting an influence on writers who had not been steeped in the classics, such as Walton and Bunyan, for instance. Other prose authors of the period expressed themselves in an impassioned, rhythmical, or poetic prose resembling Hooker's and Raleigh's, which abounds in quotations and classical allusions and quaint conceits, and which to us sounds stilted and old-fashioned. Among such prose writers are Robert Burton, Jeremy Taylor, Thomas Fuller, and Sir Thomas Browne. More modern in style than these and withal more vital are Izaak Walton and John Bunyan.

Robert Burton (1577-1640).—A quaint and curious volume of more than half-forgotten lore, the *Anatomy of Melancholy*, published in 1621, has given to the name of Robert Burton an antiquarian rather than a literary interest; but because the book proved a mine of such rich ore for later writers to dig in, the author of it attained a literary reputation hardly justified by his work. The *Anatomy of Melancholy* is, in truth, one of the curiosities of literature, into which one may dip or which one may skip, as the mood inclines. Burton lived the life of a learned recluse at Oxford, and his hobby, or "humour," was Melancholy. He read everything ancient and modern that he could find on that subject, and then made a vast patchwork of quotations with

extensive comments by himself: this is the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. He anatomizes, or analyzes, melancholy as to its causes, symptoms, and cures, dividing the malady into three kinds—head melancholy, melancholy of the whole body, and the melancholy of indigestion. The fancifulness of the division is equaled only by the suggestions for the cure of the disease: for example, as a cure for love melancholy he advises hard work together with a judicious use of cucumber, melons, lettuce, rice, and water lilies. It is only fair to say, however, that Burton attached more importance to the hard work than to the rest of the prescription. This odd medley of sense and nonsense is a monumental evidence of Burton's wide reading and mental cleverness. Partly medical, partly philosophical, the *Anatomy of Melancholy* reflects in a striking manner the temper of the earlier seventeenth century.

Jeremy Taylor and Thomas Fuller.—Jeremy Taylor was one of the great pulpit orators of the seventeenth century, an age of noted preachers; he was, besides, a writer of impassioned, rhythmic prose which moves the reader to-day by the music of its long sweeping sentences. Taylor's best remembered work is his *Holy Living and Holy Dying* (1650–1651), from which the following extract is taken as an example of his poetic prose:

> But so have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and, at first, it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath had forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirements, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head and broke its stalk; and, at night, having lost some of its leaves and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and outworn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman.

The Liberty of Prophesying (preaching), another of Taylor's works, is one of the noblest pleas for tolerance in our language.

Thomas Fuller was also a clergyman, though of different temperament from his contemporary, Taylor, and more varied in his interests, being an antiquary and biographer as well as a preacher. Fuller was a genial and even shrewd observer of men and had a quaint humor which gives to his writings a delightful flavor.

The Worthies of England (1662) is his most characteristic and entertaining work, abounding in wise reflections on men and things. Both Taylor and Fuller were strong Royalists and both fared ill while the Puritans were in power. Taylor's writings have that undertone of melancholy which we noted in the lyrics of the Cavalier poets.

Sir Thomas Browne (1605-1682).—Browne was a learned physician who, after graduating at Oxford and in medicine at the University of Leyden, settled in the town of Norwich to practice his profession and quietly continue his scientific studies and his religious meditations. He had read widely in the ancient classics and in the mediaeval treatises, medleys of science and superstition, and from these he drew much curious information which he mixed with his own investigations. Browne was a mystic, with a fancy for speculating on the odd and unusual, and touched by the prevailing melancholy of his age which at times is almost morbidness. His first work was *Religio Medici* (1642), a confession of his own creed of religious mysticism; his most interesting work, however, is *Urn-Burial*, an essay upon the vanity of earthly ambition suggested by the discovery of some Roman funeral urns buried near his home. The book is ostensibly a history of burial methods among various peoples, though it is really a series of meditations on the tragic emptiness of human pride and glory. The style of many passages has a pomp and majesty which remind one of the solemn music of a funeral march. Here are three typical sentences which will serve to illustrate the stately grandeur of the prose of Sir Thomas Browne at its best:

> There is nothing strictly immortal but immortality. . . But the sufficiency of Christian immortality frustrates all earthly glory, and the quality of either state, after death, makes a folly of posthumous memory. God, who can only destroy our souls and hath assured our resurrection, either of our bodies or names hath directly promised no duration. . . . But man is a noble animal, splendid in ashes and pompous in the grave, solemnizing nativities and deaths with equal lustre, nor omitting ceremonies of bravery in the infamy of his nature.

Izaak Walton (1593-1683).—Izaak Walton, a London linen-draper, spent his holidays in the country. He was a lover of nature

and the simple outdoor life, a genial, kindly, companionable man with the eye of a naturalist and the heart of a poet. He loved to hear milkmaids sing, to watch the flocks in the meadows, to sit by the silver stream; he thanked God for "flowers and showers, and stomachs and meat, and content and leisure to go a-fishing." At the age of sixty Walton wrote a book on fishing, *The Complete Angler*, so full of charming country scenes, so wise and wholesome in its charity and quiet humor, that successive generations have read and reread it with a growing sense of refreshment. *The Complete Angler* is a prose idyl permeated with the breath of flowers, the songs of birds, the sounds of lowing herds and running streams, and with an atmosphere of sweet content, as the fisherman (*Piscator*) talks to the hunter (*Venator*), his disciple. Walton's other work, known collectively as *The Lives*, is a series of brief biographical sketches of Donne, Herbert, Hooker, and other notable men of his day. Aside from its intrinsic value as a piece of sympathetic appreciation, this book deserves to be remembered as one of the earliest examples in our literature of regular biography, a form of writing which was to become in the next century exceedingly popular and which, along with other forms, was to contribute to the making of the novel.

JOHN BUNYAN (1628-1688)

In politics and war Cromwell stands as the representative Puritan; in poetry we have found John Milton to be the high interpreter of Puritanism; in prose we shall find that John Bunyan is the typical Puritan, though writing in changed times. Milton through his education, wide reading, and travels felt the vital influence of the Renaissance and was never wholly Puritan, but John Bunyan, the poor tinker without classical training, felt the quickening impulse of the great religious Reformation which in England expressed itself so mightily in Puritanism. Milton found a diversity of interests—literature, politics, philosophy, controversy; Bunyan's thought and energy were wholly given to religion, and his one immortal book is a spiritual autobiography.

His Life.—John Bunyan was born in the village of Elstow, in Bedfordshire, in 1628. His father was poor and the boy's educational opportunities were limited to such schooling as the village afforded him while he was not working at his father's trade of tinker. As a small boy he began to help his father, following his humble trade the rest of his life. After serving a while in the army, before he was grown he married at about the age of twenty a girl as poor as himself. Now began the great religious struggle of his life, occasioned, it appears, by the reading of several devotional books which his wife, a "godly person," had brought as her sole dowry. Even from his boyhood, however, Bunyan had been troubled with terrifying religious visions; now they became more vivid and terrible until he had no peace. The Puritan conscience was at work, and Bunyan doubtless magnified slight transgressions into unpardonable sins. Except for his profanity he could hardly be charged with any very serious violation of the moral law, if his other sins were no worse than dancing, ringing the bells of the parish church, and playing at the popular sport of tip-cat. At any rate, he suffered as acutely as if he had really been what he said he was, "the chief of sinners." After six or seven years of spiritual conflict, during which he read and studied the Bible with intense earnestness, Bunyan attained comparative religious calm,

MEMORIAL WINDOW TO JOHN BUNYAN IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY

having meanwhile (1653) joined a congregation of Dissenters in Bedford. From that time to the end of his life he gave himself unsparingly to good works, preaching at home, in neighboring towns and villages, and in London whenever opportunity offered. There is abundant testimony to the power of Bunyan as a preacher.

In 1660 Bunyan was thrown into prison for refusing to observe the law which forbade unauthorized religious services in private houses and barns, a law directed against Non-conformist ministers. Efforts were made to have him released, but without avail, and he remained in Bedford jail twelve years, during which he wrote and read much. After 1672 Bunyan was free, except for an imprisonment of six months in 1675 when he is supposed to have written the first part of *Pilgrim's Progress*. As a Puritan and a dissenting preacher he, with many others of his faith, suffered the rigorous prosecutions of the returning Royalists after the Restoration, but he followed his conscience unwaveringly, preferring to remain in prison rather than promise to give up preaching. From his release in 1672, due to a pardon under the Declaration of Indulgence passed that year, to his death Bunyan continued to write and preach; so great, indeed, was his popularity that crowds flocked to hear him whenever he was announced to preach in London. He died in London on one of these visits in 1688 and was buried in Bunhill Fields cemetery.

His Works and Influence.—Bunyan's books are vivid transcripts of his own spiritual experiences set forth in more or less allegorical form. Exclusive of *Pilgrim's Progress*, his important works are *The Holy City, Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, The Holy War, Life and Death of Mr. Badman. The Holy War* is an allegory in which the knights are Christian warriors arrayed against the World, the Flesh, and the Devil; *Grace Abounding* is a detailed account of the author's own spiritual conflicts; *The Life and Death of Mr. Badman* is a powerful character-study running through a series of effective dramatic incidents, and in some important particulars like the modern novel.

Bunyan's masterpiece is of course the *Pilgrim's Progress*, the first part of which was published in 1678 and the second part in 1684. It is the journey of Christian "from this world to that which is to come, delivered under the similitude of a dream," to quote a part of the original title. We all know the story: how a man called Christian with a book in his hand and a burden on his back starts out from the city of Destruction; how he is joined by

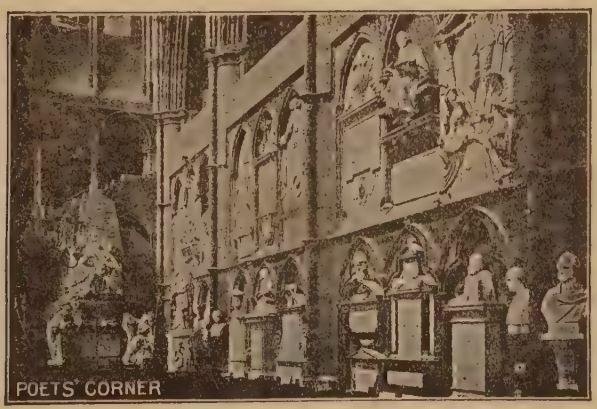
various persons who hinder or help him; how he falls in the Slough of Despond, meets the Lions in the way, passes through the Valley of Humiliation, fights the demon Apollyon, enters the Valley of the Shadow, suffers in Vanity Fair and Doubting Castle, reaches the Delectable Mountains, then the dark River, and on beyond at last the shining City and singing Angels. It is all strangely real; no shadowy abstractions as in *The Fairie Queene*, but tangible folk with passions and experiences very like our own. No wonder men read the *Pilgrim's Progress* in those times as we would a novel to-day, for here was a book in language and pictures which everybody could understand, a realistic story of struggles and aspirations straight from the heart which the common man would gladly read. Bunyan was brought up on the Bible and Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, and so thoroughly had he assimilated these that their strong, concrete, pictorial language became his own; he had, moreover, caught the wonderful rhythm of Biblical prose, and this gives to many a passage in *Pilgrim's Progress* a cadence rarely to be found even among the poets.

The appeal of *Pilgrim's Progress* is universal: old and young, learned and illiterate, the high and the low, find in it something of actual or potential experience; children read it, or love to hear it read, for the romance of the story—the thrilling escapes, the fights, the pictures; others read it for comfort and encouragement in their spiritual struggles. Next to the Bible no other single book in our literature has been so widely read as *Pilgrim's Progress*; during the author's lifetime it went through ten editions, a remarkable record; since then it has been translated into more than seventy-five languages and dialects, an extraordinary record. It is the greatest prose allegory in English literature, as Spenser's *Fairie Queene* is the greatest poetic allegory; it is hardly too much to say, indeed, that *Pilgrim's Progress* is the most powerful prose allegory in all literature. *Paradise Lost* and *Pilgrim's Progress* are the supreme productions of Puritan England.

Aside from its general literary and religious value, *Pilgrim's Progress* is important because it helped to prepare the way for the rise of the English novel in the next century. "To John Bun-

yan," says Professor Cross,[1] "the English novel owes a very great debt. . . . . As no writer preceding him, Bunyan knew the artistic effect of minute detail in giving reasonableness to an inpossible story. In the *Pilgrim's Progress* he so mingled with those imaginative scenes of his own the familiar Scripture imagery and the still more familiar incidents of English village life, that the illusion of reality must have been to the readers for whom he wrote well-nigh perfect." The book is above all an intensely personal book, the mature product of a man whose conversion, preceded and followed by agonies and visions, was the supreme crisis of his life; a man who was too great and tolerant, though graced by little learning and no social prestige, to be either politically or religiously sectarian. Such was the character and such the work of the greatest prose-writer of the Puritan Period. Though he lived on far into the Restoration Period and composed his famous book in a time of changed ideals, Bunyan was in spirit a typical Puritan, worthy to be classed with Cromwell and Milton because of his loyalty to conscience and his abiding influence on the minds of men.

[1] Development of the English Novel, p. 21.



THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1625-1660)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. Poetry	
The "Spenserian" Poets: Fletcher, Browne, Wither	Reign of Charles I, 1625-1649
The "Metaphysical" Poets: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, Cowley, Waller	The Commonwealth, 1649-1660
The Cavalier Poets: **Herrick,** Lovelace, Carew, Suckling	Cromwell, Protector, 1653-58
John Milton (1608-1674): Lyric, Prose, Epic; Minor (Horton) Poems (1632-37), **Paradise Lost** (1667)	Civil War, 1642-48
II. Prose	
Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, 1621	Puritans migrate to New England, Cavaliers to Virginia, 1630-49
Browne's Religio Medici, 1642	
Walton's Complete Angler (1653) and Lives	
John Bunyan (1628-1688): Pilgrim's Progress (1678)	Richard Cromwell, 1658-60

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS:—The Triumph of Puritanism; last of the Elizabethans; struggle of Cavalier and Roundhead; religious poetry and prose.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Tulloch's English Puritanism and its Leaders, Gardiner's The First Two Stuarts and the Puritan Revolution, Morley's Life of Cromwell, Carlyle's Cromwell's Letters and Speeches.

Literary.—Masterman's The Age of Milton (Macmillan), Saintsbury's Elizabethan Literature (last four or five chapters), Dowden's Puritan and Anglican, Gosse's Jacobean Poets, Schelling's Seventeenth Century Lyrics (Ginn), Wendell's The Temper of the Seventeenth Century in Literature, Jenks's In the Days of Milton, Froude's Life of Bunyan (English Men of Letters), Palmer's Life of Herbert, Lives of Donne, Browne, and Taylor, by Gosse (English Men of Letters). Selections from the works of writers in

this period may be had in cheap form in Morley's Universal Library (Routledge), Bohn's Select Library (Bell), The Temple Classics (Dent), and Cassell's National Library.

Milton.—Works, edited by Masson, Globe ed. (Macmillan). Life, by Garnett (Great Writers Series), by Pattison (English Men of Letters), by Raleigh, by Trent; Corson's Introduction to Milton (Macmillan), Brooke's Milton (Appleton) is a valuable little manual.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE RESTORATION PERIOD

1660-1700

THE AGE OF DRYDEN

The Restoration.—The year 1660 marks one of the great turning-points of English history and consequently of English literature. That year Charles II came back from France, where he had been in exile during the rule of the Puritans under the Commonwealth, and mounted the throne of his ancestors. The Restoration of the monarchy was hailed with great joy, and the king was welcomed home with such popular demonstrations as usually greet a conqueror returning victorious from his wars. Charles lost no time in letting it be known that the new order of things was to be a reign of unrestrained pleasure and reckless gayety. The truth is, the mood of the nation had changed; the repression of Puritanism had, as was to be expected, resulted in reaction; the people were tired of the severity and monotony of the last ten or more years and wanted the old games and sports, hungered and thirsted for "more cakes and ale," were quite ready to exchange dismal England for the good old merry England. Moreover, it must be confessed that the high promise of Puritanism had not been realized: Cromwell was dead and Milton, old and blind, was in retirement, and there was disillusion tending towards chaos; the divine passion for liberty seemed to have degenerated into a species of military despotism in politics and into something very like hypocrisy in religion. At all events, the policy of repression had overshot itself and the nation wanted rest and entertainment.

They got what they wanted with a vengeance. Charles was a gay and accomplished voluptuary, of pleasing manners and ready

wit, "a fellow of infinite jest," but without patriotism or honor, and shamelessly corrupt. As was the king, so was the court: fresh from France, the gilded courtiers took their cue from their master and enlivened the capital with the licentious manners of a foreign court. They ate, drank, and were merry, caring naught for the morrow—"sons of Belial, flown with insolence and wine." The moral depravity of king and court lowered the tone of political and religious life and brought defilement into literature; high offices of State were given to men whose baseness was equaled only by their unblushing effrontery, while preferments in the Church were handed out to conscienceless time-servers. Dissolute courtiers wrote graceful but decadent lyrics for their friends and admirers, and a fawning circle of dramatists composed clever but immoral plays for the theaters, opened again after eighteen years.

But this riotous excess which attended the reaction from Puritanism is not to be regarded as reflecting the temper of all the English people; the great conservative masses, in whom the saving Anglo-Saxon virtues of decency and purity still lived, must not be overlooked in any general estimate of this age of low standards in court society. The people at large were true to their better traditions in spite of the profligacy of the king and his ministers and flatterers; but the court sets the fashion in manners and letters and we are too often inclined to condemn a whole nation for the offense of a comparatively small part. Puritanism was not altogether a lost cause; the fundamental principles of righteousness and liberty which the Puritans fought for triumphed in the long run, and England never forgot the lesson she learned in those years of bitter struggle for religious and political freedom. When in 1688 James II tried to undo the work of a century and a half of religious reform, disregarding the strong Protestant sentiments of his people, all England united to drive him from the throne and then chose William of Orange for their king. Thus the Revolution of 1688 was itself a reaction and successful protest against the excesses of the Restoration; the nation put her house in order and settled down again to cleaner living and higher

thinking. The troublesome doctrine of the divine right of kings had been forever settled and constitutional government had become an established policy in England. Modern England was now ready to enter fully upon her career of colonial and commercial expansion.

The French Influence.—Numbers of literary men had left England during the disturbed years of the Commonwealth and gone to live in Paris where the English king was in exile with his courtiers. While in France these Englishmen came to like French literature as well as French manners, and when they returned to England at the Restoration they introduced both the literary and social fashions which they had learned abroad. Their sojourn in Paris happened to be in the most brilliant social and literary period of French history, the age of Louis XIV—the Golden, or Augustan Age of France—in which flourished the great dramatists Corneille, Racine, and Molière, and the eminent critic Boileau, the literary lawgiver of the latter half of the seventeenth century. As in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Italy was supreme in literary reputation over Europe, so in the seventeenth century France was supreme. The Renaissance, as we have seen, came to England from Italy; the next literary impulse came from France through the returning exiles and worked an almost startling change in English poetry and prose.

The French writers of the Louis XIV period were guided in their work by the rules laid down for dramatic composition by the ancient classical authorities, such as Aristotle and Horace, caring more for regularity and finish than for depth of feeling and lofty imagination, more for form than for spirit. Considering this regular and restrained style as elegant and "proper," the French critics and their English imitators regarded Shakespeare and the other Elizabethans as wild and irregular geniuses, little better, indeed, than barbarians. We find, for instance, in the diary of John Evelyn, who wrote in the reign of Charles II and later, this statement: "I saw *Hamlet* played; but now the old plays begin to disgust this refined age, since his Majesty's being so long abroad." This view is the prevailing one among critics of the

Restoration Period and marks the rise of Classicism in our literature, as opposed to the romantic spirit of Elizabethan poetry under Italian influence. We shall see later on how this French importation of Classicism dominated English poetry and prose for the next hundred years.

The New Literature.—The literature of the Puritan Period overlaps that of the Restoration Period proper, for both Milton and Bunyan composed their greatest works in the latter period; but new tendencies had already begun to manifest themselves side by side with the older literature. In the first place, the new poetry was written almost altogether in the "heroic couplet," or two rhyming iambic pentameter lines containing one complete thought. As already pointed out, the poet Waller had introduced this form years before his pupil John Dryden made it the prevailing fashion. In the Restoration poetry the couplet became a polished unit through which a clever literary artist delivered himself of witty epigrams at the expense of some contemporary political, religious, or social movement and its principal advocate: this is Satire, of which more will be said later on. The new poetry was cold and formal, hard and intellectual, restrained and regular, as compared with the impassioned, highly colored, emotional qualities of much of the older poetry.

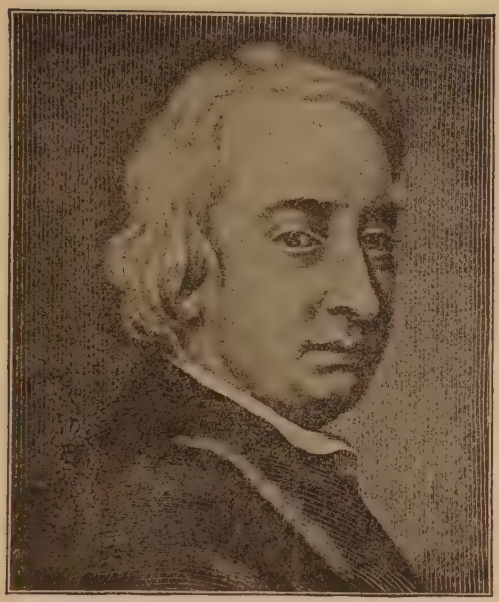
In the second place, the new prose was precise, clear, direct, in striking contrast to the old poetic, or rhetorical prose with its long involved sentences and general lack of definiteness of form. This new prose style was due in part to a conscious or unconscious imitation of French models and in part to the changed temper of the age, which was more worldly and prosaic, more "practical" as we would say, than the full-blooded, strenuous, heroic times of Elizabeth. Indeed, both poetry and prose in the Restoration Period show that the old enthusiasm of the nation was temporarily exhausted, that men and women were emotionally tired and wanted a literature of plain, good common sense. And so the writers of the day, following the French taste for form and thought not above the well-bred man's comprehension, gave the public prose and poetry based on "reason and good sense,"

a phrase much used by French critics. To this clarifying influence of French prose upon our own, English literature owes a great debt; it was in this period that our literary prose took on the modern form.

A third and less pleasing tendency is to be noted in the new literature, namely, vulgar realism in dramatic writing through the reflection in the plays of the manners of the corrupt court society. The one dominant figure of this period is John Dryden, in whom are found all the characteristics of the new literature. After considering him, we may briefly notice the minor writers. The leading kinds of literature in the Restoration Period are Satires, Drama, Criticism, Diaries.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1700)

His Life.—John Dryden, dramatist, satirist, critic, and literary dictator of his age, was born at the village of Aldwinkle, Northamptonshire, in 1631. He came of an ancestry of country gentlemen of Puritan sympathies. Dryden studied at Westminster School, London, under the famous Dr. Busby; in 1650 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge, where he took his bachelor's degree in 1654. After spending several years at his country home, he went up to London and there passed the rest of his life, finding, as did most of the writers of that age, the city more congenial than the country. His first poem of any consequence, "Heroic Stanzas on the Death of Oliver Cromwell," appeared in 1658, the year of Cromwell's death, and is a tribute of considerable power to the great Puritan. Two years later Dryden welcomed Charles II in a poem of such fulsome flattery that it won the favor of the followers of the "merry Monarch," and proved the first step towards fortune and fame. In 1663 Dryden married Lady Elizabeth Howard, sister of the dramatist, Sir Robert Howard, and daughter of a well-known nobleman. Though this marriage did not prove a particularly happy one, it brought Dryden into greater social prominence and thereby helped to advance his fortunes. In 1660 the theaters were opened again after years of Puritan prohibition, and there was a consequent demand for new plays in harmony with the changed taste; whereupon Dryden gave himself with successful energy to the writing of "heroic tragedies" for the Restoration stage. So well did he please the king and the Royalists with his plays and with a really vigorous poem, *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), that in 1670 he was made Poet Laureate and also Historiographer Royal.



JOHN DRYDEN

The turning-point of Dryden's life came in 1681, when he published the great political satire, *Absalom and Achitophel*, an attack on the Earl of Shaftesbury, leader of the party in opposition to the king who were urging the claims of the Duke of Monmouth as Charles's successor. The poem appeared at an opportune moment, when the public mind was greatly agitated in a heated political controversy, and Dryden's satire made a decided hit. He had at last, at the age of fifty, discovered his true vein. He left off writing dramas and set himself to composing those brilliant political and personal satires which established his fame as the most vigorous and original writer of his day. He was now looked upon as the champion of the court against the enemies of the king, and in return he looked to the court for financial aid. Although Dryden had written a poem in defense of the Church of England, *Religio Laici* (1683), the year before the accession of James II, he nevertheless withdrew from the Established Church and became a Catholic in 1686, and next year published a poem, the *Hind and the Panther*, in defense of his new faith which was also that of the new king. At the Revolution of 1688, which resulted in the dethronement of James II and the triumph of Protestantism, Dryden, who did not again change his

religion, was deprived of his pension and the laureateship, which was now given to his old enemy Shadwell. Undaunted he turned again to playwriting, translated Virgil and other Latin poets, introduced Chaucer to his readers through a modernized version, and wrote two great odes. During these years he used to sit a part of each day in Will's Coffee-House surrounded by a group of ardent disciples who eagerly drank in every word from the acknowledged arbiter of English letters. These last years were in many respects the best of his life; he worked steadily and manfully to support himself, "struggling with want, oppressed with sickness," as he tells us, but not dispirited, he also assures us. Dryden died in 1700, and was buried near Chaucer in Westminster Abbey.

His Personality.—Dryden's character is a curiously contradictory one, as his political and religious vacillations prove: in earlier life he eulogizes Oliver Cromwell, then welcomes with effusive praise Charles II; a Protestant through Charles's reign, he then turns Catholic at fifty-five and remains true to that faith the rest of his life; he writes plays of low moral tone to catch the popular taste, and when Collier attacks him in his famous pamphlet on "the immorality and profaneness of the English stage," the old poet manfully acknowledges the justice, in the main, of the charges. The truth seems to be that Dryden was without strong convictions, a typical representative of an age without spiritual ideals who persuaded himself, doubtless with little effort, that the right lay on the side of the party in power. He closely watched the popular moods and gave the people of London, the great majority that followed the royal leading, what they wanted at any particular time.

Yet, in spite of this ignoble time-serving, Dryden was not without a certain sturdiness and independence of character which the many inconsistencies of his career cannot entirely hide. His friends spoke of him as "glorious old John," and contemporary opinion goes to show that he was generous and worthy of confidence, a man of greater sincerity than his public actions and utterances would indicate.[1] Real loftiness of character, however, we

[1] Dryden was one of the very few in the Restoration Period who appreciated the greatness of Milton as a poet. He wrote the famous lines beginning, "Three poets, in three distant ages born," etc.

do not expect to find in an era when cleverness of intellect was more highly esteemed in literature than moral nobility and imaginative reach; Dryden the man is as striking an example of the spiritual limitations of the day as is Dryden the writer.

His Works and Influence.—Dryden was the most versatile writer of his age, expressing himself in verse or prose with equal ease and turning from one form of literature to another with remarkable facility. He was Dramatist, Satirist, Translator, and Critic; and while these four kinds of literary activity do not include all his writings, for convenience we may adopt this general classification.

(1) **Dramas.** Playwriting was a money-making occupation in the Restoration Period, and Dryden turned to it with noteworthy success about 1663. Within the next eighteen years he wrote some twenty plays—tragedies, comedies, tragi-comedies; five dramas composed in later life bring the total up to twenty-five. In the preface to one of his earlier plays, *The Indian Emperor*, he says: "I confess my chief endeavours are to delight the age in which I live. If the humour of this be for low comedy, small accidents and raillery, I will force my genius to obey it, though with more reputation I could write in verse." That he did force his genius in this species of composition is proved by the fact that nobody reads these plays to-day, except specialists, so unworthy are they of Dryden's better nature. Only one of them, *All for Love*, an adaptation of Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra*, was written, it is said, to please himself; this is in blank verse and is worth reading, if for nothing else than to see how inferior the dramatic taste of Restoration folk was to that of the Elizabethans.

(2) **Satires.** Satire may be defined as that kind of literature in which a current form of folly, evil, or incapacity, as exemplified in some well-known person, is held up to ridicule. In the Elizabethan age there were several prominent satirists, such as Hall, Marston, and Lodge, who lashed contemporary vice and folly after the manner of the great Roman satirists, Horace, Juvenal, and Persius, and who, along with Donne just a little later, used the rhyming couplet which later grew into the "heroic couplet."

Dryden was, however, the first writer in our literature to raise satire into universal favor as an instrument of stinging personal and political warfare. *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) was the first of Dryden's satires and is in many respects the most powerful. The Bible account of the revolt of Absalom and his evil counsellor Achitophel against King David is made to fit existing conditions in English politics: Achitophel is the Earl of Shaftesbury, able but unscrupulous minister, who aids Absalom, the young Duke of Monmouth (the king's illegitimate son), in his plans to become the successor of King David, or Charles II. Around these leaders are grouped their principal sympathizers, chief among whom is Zimri, the Duke of Buckingham, satirized by Dryden as—

> Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong,
> Was everything by starts and nothing long,
> But in the course of one revolving moon
> Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.

Throughout this defense of the king's side, Dryden exposes the doings of the hostile faction with merciless irony in stabbing couplets. The temper of this famous attack on Shaftesbury, as well as the nature of the "heroic couplet," may be seen in the following portrait of that personage under the name of Achitophel:

> Of these the false Achitophel was first,
> A name to all succeeding ages curst:
> For close designs and crooked counsels fit,
> Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit,
> Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
> In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace:
> A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
> Fretted the pigmy body to decay
> And o'er informed the tenement of clay.
> A daring pilot in extremity,
> Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
> He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
> Would steer too near the sands to boast his wit.
> Great wits are sure to madness near allied
> And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

Else, why should he, with wealth and honour blest,
Refuse his age the needed hours of rest?
Punish a body which he could not please,
Bankrupt of life, yet prodigal of ease?
And all to leave what with his toil he won
To that unfeathered two-legg'd thing, a son.

So well pleased was the king with the success of *Absalom and Achitophel* that he encouraged Dryden to publish the next year another satire, *The Medal*, making a further attack on Shaftesbury. To this the Whigs, through Shadwell, a poet and dramatist of their political faith and one of Dryden's rivals, replied. Then Dryden wrote *MacFlecknoe*, a caustic attack on Shadwell, whom he represents as a candidate for the throne of Nonsense, lately made vacant by the death of a second-rate Irish poet named Richard Flecknoe. By *Mac*-Flecknoe Dryden meant to call Shadwell the son of this obscure poet. In this satire occur the oft-quoted lines:

The rest to some faint meaning make pretense,
But Shadwell never deviates into sense;
Some beams of wit on other souls may fall,
Strike through, and make a lucid interval;
But Shadwell's genuine night admits no ray,
His rising fogs prevail upon the day.

It should be said in justice to Shadwell that he was not in fact the hopelessly stupid character that Dryden represents him to be; but this exceedingly clever satire caused him to be laughed out of reputation and he has come down to posterity in this vivid word-portrait of Dryden's. In his ability at satirical character-delineation Dryden has never been excelled, not even by his disciple, Alexander Pope, in the next century.

(3) **Translations and Adaptations.** Dryden translated Virgil's *Aeneid*, selections from various other classic poets, stories from the Italian writer Boccaccio, into English verse. Besides this, he made an adaptation of Chaucer's "Knight's Tale" under the name of *Palamon and Arcite*. This volume of selections, which

he published as *Fables*, or stories, is one of Dryden's most pleasing works, while his translation of Virgil became widely popular.

(4) **Criticisms.** In the prefaces to his plays and poems Dryden has left us some of the most valuable prose criticism in our literature, expressed in clear, terse, vigorous language and showing his good sense, wide reading, and fine power of discrimination. His famous *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* remains one of the standard pieces of literary criticism in our language.

Not included in the four classes just enumerated are his two poems, *Religio Laici* and the *Hind and the Panther*, the first in defense of the Church of England, and the second in praise of the Church of Rome; *Annus Mirabilis* ("The Wonderful Year"), celebrating the victories over the Dutch and giving an account of the great fire of London (1666); and his famous lyrics, "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" and "Alexander's Feast." These two odes, while wanting the natural charm of a Wordsworth ode, have high artistic merit and serve to illustrate how well Dryden could now and then rise into a region above satire and criticism.

Dryden's distinctive contribution to English literature is threefold: first, the employment of satire with such vigor and originality through the "heroic couplet" as the unit of expression that this form of verse became the prevailing one in the eighteenth century; second, the introduction of a sounder method of literary criticism, more dispassionate and less under the tyranny of ancient rules; and third, a more direct and natural prose made up of shorter sentences as units of thought, and essentially modern.

Butler's Hudibras.—An immensely popular work among the Royalists was *Hudibras*, a satirical poem against the Puritans by Samuel Butler (1612-1680), private secretary to a Puritan justice during the Commonwealth and later on secretary to the Lord President of Wales. *Hudibras* is loosely modeled on Don Quixote, the Puritan knight Sir Hudibras and his squire Ralpho passing through a series of mildly quixotic adventures which suggest the grotesque experiences of the Spanish knight and his man Sancho Panza. Butler's work heaps ridicule upon Puritan intolerance and sanctimoniousness by lampooning virtues as well as vices.

It is a scurrilous attack on the discredited Puritans by a representative of the court party. The clever hitting off of certain oddities of manner and speech, with gross exaggeration, in short rhyming couplets made *Hudibras* a sort of comic political and social pamphlet of the day which the Royalists read with keen enjoyment. Everybody quoted the pungent sentences of this mock-heroic poem which so mercilessly pilloried the Puritans. Without any special literary merit, *Hudibras* would have been forgotten except for the many proverbial sayings it contained which stuck in the common speech and so have come down to us, while the poem as a whole long ago ceased to interest. Here are a few of the striking couplets:

He that runs may fight again,
Which he can never do that's slain.

He that complies against his will
Is of his own opinion still.

Opinion governs all mankind,
Like the blind's leading of the blind.

He was in logic a great critic,
Profoundly skilled in analytic:
He could distinguish, and divide
A hair 'twixt south and south-west side;
On either which he would dispute,
Confute, change hands, and still confute.

For he was of that stubborn crew
Of errant Saints, whom all men grant
To be the true Church Militant;
Such as do build their faith upon
The holy text of pike and gun;
Decide all controversies by
Infallible artillery;
And prove their doctrine orthodox
By apostolic blows and knocks.

The Dramatists.—Besides Dryden, there were a number of other dramatists in the Restoration Period, and these may be

divided into two groups, the writers of Tragedy and the writers of Comedy.

(1) **Restoration Tragedy: "Heroic Plays."** The tragic dramatists were influenced by the old Elizabethan traditions and to some extent by French tragedy as perfected by Corneille and Racine. They usually chose some ancient or mediaeval hero and made the plot revolve about him. As the characters were greatly heightened and the scene magnified to almost superhuman proportions, these dramas came to be known as "heroic plays." Often, indeed, the speeches were exceedingly stilted, the veriest rant and fustian, "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." That is true in some of Dryden's tragedies, while it is a leading characteristic of the plays of Nathaniel Lee, one of the most gifted of Restoration playwrights, who led a dissipated life and died insane at the age of thirty-seven. Most of these tragedies were highly artificial, their plots well-nigh impossible, and the rhetorical nature of the dialogue was intensified by the use of rhyming couplets. The best of the group was THOMAS OTWAY (1651–1685), who died young, worn out by a struggle with poverty after turning from acting to playwriting. Two of Otway's dramas, *The Orphan* and *Venice Preserved*, have genuine merit and continued to be favorites on the stage long after their author's death. *Venice Preserved* shows genuine passion, something of Elizabethan fire and grandeur. Otway at his best excelled Dryden in naturalness of plot and character and in depth of feeling.

(2) **Restoration Comedy: The Comedy of Manners.** Restoration comedy is a realistic reflection of the manners and talk of the upper classes of that age. We have seen how in Ben Jonson's comedies the "humors," or peculiar dispositions, of individuals and social groups were realistically set forth, and how a little later Shirley, the last of the Elizabethan dramatists, depicted in his plays the speech and interests of fashionable London society. These earlier and cruder examples of social comedy were followed in the Restoration era by a genuine Comedy of Manners in which current modes of life, dress, and conversation were reproduced

with almost startling realism. The influence of the brilliant comedy of Molière, who was writing and acting in Paris at this time, is shown in these Restoration plays. The first of the group, Sir George Etherege, had spent much time in Paris and had seen Molière's comedies acted; Wycherley, court favorite and successor of Etherege, owed something to Molière in the structure of his plots. These new comedies were usually in prose, whereas the old romantic comedy of Shakespeare was in verse.

The most brilliant of the writers of Restoration comedy was WILLIAM CONGREVE (1670–1729), whose masterpieces, *Love for Love* and *The Way of the World*, appeared in 1695 and 1700 respectively. Brilliancy of dialogue makes up for improbability of plot which is generally a love intrigue; lifelike characters, sparkling wit, clever verbal fence, external polish, internal rottenness, distinguish these plays. In artistic finish and superficial brilliancy the prose of Congreve has not been surpassed, indeed, scarcely equaled: the witty, corrupt, scintillating talk of men and women of polite society disporting themselves at the theater, the coffee-house, in the drawing-rooms, in gardens and pleasure parks of London, is the subject matter of this highly finished prose. All the sacred institutions of life, particularly marriage, are flippantly treated, made the subjects of cynical jest, while thinly-veiled allusion invests the whole with an atmosphere of indecency. The coarseness of Vanbrugh is less refined than that of Wycherley, but in Farquhar, the last of the group, there is a healthier tone, his *Beaux' Stratagem* containing some genuine fun and wholesome characters.

The Restoration comedies became so unbearable that in 1698 the Reverend Jeremy Collier published his now famous pamphlet on the *Profaneness and Immorality of the English Stage*. This timely attack had its effect and the next decade brought a change for the better in the English drama. The corrupt Restoration dramatists have been treated with well-merited neglect by successive generations of readers.

The Diarists: Pepys and Evelyn.—Ordinarily diaries do not belong to literature proper, but whenever such a daily record

reveals the experiences and observations of an interesting personality in a preëminently social age, it claims our attention as a human document in any adequate account of the making of literature. Two men of the Restoration Period have left such records, Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn. Samuel Pepys was a busy man of practical affairs who held various government positions, the most important of which was that of Secretary to the Admiralty, or Navy Department. For ten years (1660–1669) Pepys kept a diary in a cipher, or shorthand, of his own, which was not translated until 1825. The manuscript of this diary, together with other manuscripts and a large collection of books and pictures, he left at his death to Magdalen College, Cambridge University, his *alma mater*, where they are now kept in a separate library.

Pepys' *Diary* is perhaps the most remarkable piece of minute self-revelation known to historians. Pepys was interested in everything, from the gossip of servants, the latest fashion, the newest play, to affairs of State and the scandals of court society. He sets down without reserve his inmost thoughts on this person, that incident, the other experience, and so on in endless detail, chattering along under the cover of his secret cipher. But this garrulous gossip has given us an invaluable storehouse of interesting information about the society of his time, and in so doing he unconsciously illustrated that love of realistic portraiture out of which in the next century the novel was to be born. Several extracts from the *Diary* will give a better idea of Pepys and his method than pages of description:

October 13, 1660.—I went out to Charing Cross, to see Major-General Harrison hanged, drawn, and quartered; which was done there, he looking as cheerful as any man could do in that condition. He was presently cut down, and his head and heart shown to the people, at which there was great shouts of joy.... Thus it was my chance to see the King beheaded at Whitehall, and to see the first blood shed in revenge for the blood of the King at Charing Cross. From thence to my Lord's, and took Captain Cuttance and Mr. Sheply to the Sun Tavern, and did give them some oysters. After that I went by water home, where I was angry with my wife for her things lying about, and in my passion kicked the little fine basket, which I bought her in Holland, and broke it, which troubled me after I had done it.

December 28, 1663.—Walking through White Hall I heard the King was gone to play at tennis, so I down to the New Tennis Court, and saw him and Sir Arthur Slingsby play against my Lord of Suffolke and my Lord Chesterfield. The King beat three, and lost two sets, they all, and he particularly playing well, I thought. Thence went and spoke with the Duke of Albemarle about his wound at Newhall, but I find him a heavy dull man, methinks, by his answers to me.

January 1, 1664.—At the Coffee-house, where much talking about a very rich widow, young and handsome, of one Sir Nicholas Gold's, a merchant, lately fallen, and of great courtiers that already look after her: her husband not dead a week yet. She is reckoned worth 80,000 pounds. Went to the Duke's Theatre, the first play I have been at these six months, according to my last vowe, and here saw the so much cried-up play of Henry the Eighth; which, though I went with resolution to like it, is so simple a thing made up of a great many patches, that, besides the shows and processions in it, there is nothing in the world good or well done.

May 1, 1669.—Up betimes. My wife extraordinary fine with her flowered tabby gown that she made two years ago, now laced exceeding pretty. And mighty earnest to go, though the day was very lowering; and she would have me put on my fine suit, which I did. And so anon we went alone through the town with our new liveries of serge, and the horses' manes and tails tied with red ribbons, and the standards thus gilt with varnish, and all clean, and green reines, that people did look mightily upon us; and the truth is, I did not see any coach more pretty, though more gay, than ours all the day.

Two of the most interesting entries in Pepys' *Diary* are those relating to the coronation of Charles II and the great fire of London in 1666 from which Pepys was himself a sufferer. Indeed, there are few more readable books in our literature before the rise of the modern novel than this personal record of Samuel Pepys.

Of less intimate character is the *Diary* of John Evelyn, traveler, scholar, favorite of Charles II, and like Pepys a member of the Royal Society of London. Evelyn was a man of dignity and purity of character, "a good man in difficult times," and his *Diary*, covering the years from 1640 to 1706, is a mine of valuable and precise information in an age when English society and politics were undergoing radical changes. The effect of these changes

is still more marked in the literature of the early eighteenth century, when "prose and reason" triumphed over imagination and sentiment.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1660–1700)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
John Dryden (1631-1700), Satirist, Dramatist, Translator, Critic	Reign of Charles (Restoration) 1660-1685
Restoration Dramatists ("Comedy of Manners"): Congreve, Wycherley, Vanbrugh	Reign of James II, 1685-88
Butler's Hudibras (1663)	Revolution, 1688
Pepys's Diary (1660-1669)	William and Mary, 1689-1702
Evelyn's Diary (1640-1706)	Plague and Fire of London, 1665-66
Collier's Attack on the Stage, 1698	Newton's Proof of Law of Gravitation, 1687

GENERAL CHARACTERISTCS:—Reaction from Puritanism; French influence; beginnings of Classicism.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Hale's The Fall of the Stuarts, Airy's The English Restoration and Louis XIV, Macaulay's History of England, vol. I, chap. 3 (brilliant account of social conditions).

Literary.—Garnett's The Age of Dryden (Macmillan), Wendell's Temper of the Seventeenth Century in English Literature, Dowden's Puritan and Anglican, Gosse's From Shakespeare to Pope, Hazlitt's Lectures on the English Comic Writers (Everyman's Library), Globe edition of Dryden's Works, Saintsbury's Life of Dryden (English Men of Letters), Pepys's Diary (Everyman's Library), Plays of Restoration Dramatists in Mermaid Series.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE EARLIER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1700-1740

THE AGE OF POPE: CLASSICISM

A Social Age.—The Age of Queen Anne, as the earlier part of the eighteenth century is often called, was in its literature and manners simply a continuation and expansion of the Restoration Period. The influence of the court on literature was less, but the city continued to be the center of literary interest: the writers lived in the town, wrote for the town and about the town, portraying in very great detail the society of the town. It was above all else a social age, in which urbanity of manner counted for more than depth of thought or sincerity of conviction. The moral tone was low, manifesting itself in coarseness of speech and in other forms of disregard of the proprieties of life. Gambling and drinking were prevalent vices; the laws were poorly enforced; all sorts of swindling schemes flourished; highwaymen made unsafe the public highways, while riotous gangs of young men calling themselves "Mohawks" often attacked pedestrians in the London streets at night, playing upon men and women rude practical jokes. The streets of London were narrow, badly paved, and because of their reeking gutters often very unsanitary. The population of the city at this time was hardly more than half a million; for that very reason the dwellers in the city proper could get together in a social way not possible in the vast London of to-day when the center of the town has been given over to business houses.

The most noteworthy centers of social contact were the coffee-houses, the clubs, the theaters, and the various public parks and

pleasure gardens, like St. James Park and Vauxhall Gardens. Coffee-houses and clubs had very largely superseded the taverns of Shakespeare's day as meeting-places for men of wit. Will's Coffee-house, where Dryden laid down laws for the literary world, continued to be the popular resort of literary men, while others were the favorite meeting-places of politicians, lawyers, and clergymen. The merchants, who composed the great and increasingly prosperous middle class, had their coffee-houses and clubs as well, important centers for discussion of municipal and commercial matters. At this time there were in England about three thousand of these various coffee-houses besides all sorts of clubs, from the exclusive Kit-Cat Club to the lower taverns, where little social groups of congenial companions drank, smoked, and gossiped. The most famous of these were of course in the heart of London. At the principal theaters, Drury Lane, Covent Garden, and the Haymarket, all classes assembled to hear a new comedy by Congreve, or Cibber, or Steele.

Rise of Periodical Literature.—Such great social activity meant a large class of readers who demanded entertainment from lighter forms of literature than the old standard kinds. To supply this demand various journals came into existence, some to furnish foreign or domestic news, others court news, some to concern themselves with dramatic criticism, others to comment upon the manners of the day. The age was one of great material prosperity, superficial refinement, and literary versatility. The first daily newspaper, *The Daily Courant*, began in 1702, a single sheet eight by fourteen inches; Defoe started his *Review* in 1704. Numerous weekly and monthly periodicals were born in the first decade of the eighteenth century, but most of these died an early death; the popularity of several of these journals, however, proved that henceforth this form of literature was to engage the attention of aspiring young authors. The bounds of literature were about to be enlarged by the inclusion of the periodical essay, which is the literary offspring of a quickened social sense. The most famous of the periodical essays of this age were the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*, written for the most part by Richard Steele

and Joseph Addison, of which some account will be given presently. Magazines and newspapers—those great agencies for popularizing knowledge—had their beginnings in this period of social and political interests, and by helping to make literature more democratic prepared the way for the novel.

Classicism, or Literary Conformity.—We have already seen how predominant in our literature during the latter part of the seventeenth century was the French influence, resulting in the loss of high imagination in poetry and prose and in the gain of greater exactness of expression and polish of form. Emotion died out of literature; reason, logic, common sense, restraint, outward finish, took the place of inspiration and originality. This conformity to French models is called Classicism, because the French critics based their rules very largely on the laws laid down by the Roman writers of the Augustan Age. Because of this imitation of the manner of the French writers of the seventeenth century, who were themselves imitators of the Golden Age Latin poets, Horace and Virgil, the earlier part of the eighteenth century is often called the "Augustan Age" of English literature. Poetry showed little or no genuine creative power; as compared with the Elizabethan, indeed, it was positively artificial; but there was a decided gain in correctness of form and finish. Passion and imagination, the wings on which really great poetry soars into a higher realm, are not to be found in the poetry of this chilly age of authority and regularity.

Still, viewed in the light of its later development, English poetry profited from this restraining formal influence of Classicism. English prose certainly received a very positive benefit. Our older prose, like modern German prose, was wanting in the definiteness and lucidity which characterized French prose; and the discipline through which it passed in the eighteenth century gave it such precision and flexibility that henceforth it was to be adapted to a wide range of expression. The eighteenth century is preeminently a prose century; not until then was there a distinctive, serviceable prose style in which various kinds of literature might

find utterance—the character sketch, the essay, history, satire, oratory, and above all, the novel.

Political Activity.—Between politics and literature there was a more vital relationship in the eighteenth century than had ever existed before, many of the prose writers having some sort of connection with political life. Addison, for instance, was in politics most of his life, finally rising to the office of Secretary of State. Literature had become more democratic since the reading public had grown so large and varied in this social and industrial age of coffee-houses and clubs; the government of England had also grown more democratic since the days of the Stuarts and their outworn theories about the "divine rights of kings." William III had come to the throne in 1688, ruling conjointly with Mary his wife by Parliamentary enactment. Virtually receiving his throne from Parliament, he was naturally a constitutional monarch; henceforth England was to be governed by parties and cabinets which should find their popular representation in the House of Commons.

During the reign of Queen Anne the party system steadily developed, and the government was administered now by the Tories, now by the Whigs. The Tories were the conservatives, the political successors of the Cavaliers, or Royalists, favoring the royal authority and the supremacy of the Established Church; the Whigs were the liberals, in favor of constitutional government and the right of religious dissent. So permeated is the literature of the time with the controversies between these two parties that some knowledge of political conditions is essential to an understanding of it. Of all the political figures of the day around whom controversies were fiercely waged the most conspicuous is the Duke of Marlborough, the great general who fought in the campaigns against France. He looms large in the poetry and prose of the Age of Queen Anne. His series of brilliant victories increased the prestige of England abroad, aroused great national enthusiasm, and stimulated the production of patriotic literature.

I. PROSE LITERATURE

The first forty years of the eighteenth century witnessed the production of a large body of prose literature consisting of the Periodical Essay of Addison and Steele, the Satires of Swift, and the Narratives and Pamphlets of Defoe. Although Defoe's life falls within this period, it seems best to consider his work in connection with the discussion of the English Novel a little later, for his narratives of adventure belong to the beginnings of that important literary form. The most influential prose of this period and, all things considered, the most typical of social and political conditions, is the Periodical Essay as perfected by Joseph Addison and Richard Steele.

JOSEPH ADDISON[1] (1672-1719)

His Life.—Joseph Addison was born at Milston, Wiltshire, May 1, 1672. His father, the Rev. Launcelot Addison, was a man of literary tastes and author of several works. Joseph was educated at the famous Charter House School in London and at the University of Oxford. He entered Queen's College, Oxford, at the age of fifteen, and after a residence of two years there, moved to Magdalen College on the same street and along the banks of the beautiful Cherwell. In these historic surroundings Addison passed eleven or twelve years, remaining at the University six years after he had taken his master's degree in 1693. He spent his time reading the classics, translating parts of Virgil and Ovid, and writing verses in honor of the poet Dryden and King William. His favorite walk was under the elms along the peaceful Cherwell in the grounds of Magdalen College; this charming pathway between the rows of stately trees is still known as "Addison's Walk." It looked as if the young scholar might enter the Church or become an Oxford don, for he had been made a Fellow of Magdalen College. But there were other and quite different experiences awaiting the young man. The old poet Dryden introduced Addison to Congreve the dramatist, and he in turn presented him to Charles Montague, later Lord Halifax, whom Addison had praised in one or two poems. Montague obtained a traveling pension for him in order that he might fit himself through foreign travel for the diplomatic service. Accordingly, in 1699 Addison left Oxford for the continent.

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1 Parts of this discussion of Addison and Steele are taken from the author's edition of the *Sir Roger de Coverley Papers*, published by the B. F. Johnson Publishing Company.

JOSEPH ADDISON

He spent four years in travel and in study. Meanwhile a new sovereign had come to the throne, the Tories were in power, and Addison's pension was gone, for he belonged to the Whig party. Turning to literature for a support, Addison wrote an account of his travels and did such hack work as he could find. At this critical time his old friend Montague recommended him to the Lord Treasurer, Godolphin, as a young poet who could celebrate in fitting verse the Duke of Marlborough's recent victory at Blenheim. Addison gladly set to work on a patriotic poem, which he soon had ready. This was "The Campaign," in which Marlborough is glorified as the avenging angel upon England's foes. The poem was immensely popular and Addison's political fortune was assured.

The remainder of Addison's life was given to political service and to literature. He held various offices under the government, was elected to Parliament, and two years before his death became Secretary of State. Throughout these years of participation in public affairs Addison's literary activity continued. He was a regular contributor to *The Tatler*, which his friend and schoolmate Richard Steele had begun in 1709. His best prose work is to be found in *The Spectator*. Besides these and other periodical essays in *The Guardian* and *The Freeholder*, Addison wrote a successful tragedy called *Cato*, which his contemporaries admired much more than suc-

ceeding generations have. In 1716 Addison married the Countess Dowager of Warwick and went to live at Holland House just out of London; and while this marriage may have increased his social prestige, it did not, if reports be correct, add to his felicity. In the company of a few congenial friends at his coffee-house Addison doubtless found during these last years his greatest happiness. On June 17, 1719, he died at Holland House and was buried in Westminster Abbey by the side of his "loved Montague."

MAGDALEN COLLEGE, OXFORD

His Personality.—Addison's literary contemporaries, Pope and Swift, testify to the charm of his conversation when he was at his ease with one or two congenial companions and to his general popularity; in a larger company he was apt to be silent. Pope said that Addison's conversation had something in it more charming than he had found in the talk of any other man; Swift, one of the most jealous of men, wrote to Stella that "Mr. Addison is a most excellent person." He was, indeed, universally popular in an age of bitter partisanship. Though he was no speaker, he was repeatedly elected to Parliament and appointed without personal solicitation to important offices of State. Though a Whig, he was once or twice returned to Parliament by Tory votes. Swift wrote to Steele: "I believe if he had a mind to be chosen

king, he would hardly be refused." Somewhat proud, very sensitive, reserved and self-conscious, it may appear strange that Addison was popular; but at heart he was one of the kindest, most sympathetic of men. His was the scholar's austerity, and his very dignity and silence inspired confidence, while his freedom from party bitterness gave him a certain judicial poise. To his purity of character were added the urbanity of good breeding, the courage of real conviction, and the sensibility of genius.

His Works: Poems and The Spectator.—Addison wrote a number of poems and his age esteemed him highly as a poet, but save for a few ornate passages and a hymn or two, later generations have forgotten his poetry. The "Campaign," written in 1704 to celebrate Marlborough's famous victory, contains the well-known comparison of the great warrior to an angel:

> So when an angel by divine command
> With rising tempests shakes a guilty land
> (Such as of late o'er pale Britannia passed),
> Calm and serene he drives the furious blast;
> And, pleased the Almighty's orders to perform,
> Rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm.

The soliloquy of Cato in the tragedy of that name is made up of really majestic lines, though the drama as a whole has little merit. Cato in the fifth act is represented as sitting with Plato's book on the immortality of the soul in his hand and a drawn sword on the table near him and beginning thus:

> It must be so—Plato, thou reason'st well—
> Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,
> This longing after immortality?
> Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror,
> Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul
> Back on herself, and startles at destruction?
> 'Tis the divinity that stirs within us;
> 'Tis heaven itself, that points out an hereafter,
> And intimates eternity to man.

Lines from Addison's great hymn on nature are often quoted and sung with solemn effect, for the stanzas have a splendid movement:

> The spacious firmament on high
> With all the blue ethereal sky
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great original proclaim.
> Th' unwearied sun from day to day
> Does his Creator's power display;
> And publishes to every land
> The work of an Almighty hand.

It is Addison's prose, however, that has given him a place among the masters of our language and literature. Together with his friend Richard Steele he raised the popular periodical essay to the dignity of literature. In 1709 Steele had begun the publication of *The Tatler*, and to this Addison became a contributor. So successful was Steele's venture (of which a full account will be given under Steele's works) that two years afterward he planned, together with Addison, a new periodical of wider range. This was *The Spectator*, to which Addison was the leading contributor. *The Spectator* began March 1, 1711, and appeared six times a week until December 6, 1712. After an intermission of about a year and a half, Addison revived *The Spectator*, issuing it three times a week, and wrote for it alone until its discontinuance, December 20, 1714. Of the six hundred and thirty-five numbers in the two series, two hundred and seventy-four were written by Addison, two hundred and thirty-six by Steele; the rest were contributed by political and literary friends of the two men.

The contents of the little daily paper were varied: stories, character sketches, literary and dramatic criticism, playful social satire, penetrating comments on morality and religion. *The Spectator* was laid daily upon the breakfast tables of the citizens of London, and read as they sipped their coffee or tea. It was not a newspaper, though it did contain a number of advertisements of entertainments, patent medicines, and the like; it was

usually a little morning lecture or commentary on social or literary ethics. The purpose of *The Spectator* was distinctly ethical, as explained by Addison himself:

"Since I have raised to myself so great an audience, I shall spare no pains to make their instruction agreeable, and their diversion useful. For which reason I shall endeavour to enliven morality with wit and to temper wit with morality . . . . And to the end that their virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly into which the age is fallen . . . .. The mind that lies fallow but a single day sprouts up in follies that are only to be killed by a constant and assiduous culture. It was said of Socrates that he brought Philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men; and I shall be ambitious to have it said of me that I have brought Philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

Sir Roger de Coverley. The parts of *The Spectator* most read and loved to-day are the thirty-odd selections known collectively as *The Sir Roger de Coverley Papers.* The characters who figure in these papers are members of an imaginary club to which the Spectator himself belongs. The central figure is Sir Roger de Coverley, a typical, old-fashioned country gentleman of the eighteenth century, endeared to us by his eccentricities, his prejudices, his touch of superstition, and his rusticity, all of which only serve to give color to his large humanity. We would not willingly forget such scenes as the old knight in the midst of the congregation on Sunday, his visit to the theater and the comments on the play, his troubles with the perverse widow, his visit to Westminster Abbey and his remarks on the worthies buried there, and his moral reflections in Vauxhall Gardens. Sir Roger is one of the unforgettable portraits in our imaginative literature. Grouped around him are other characters more or less clearly drawn: Sir Andrew Freeport, the prosperous London merchant and the devoted Whig who dislikes the Tory principles of Sir Roger; Captain Sentry, the military man, with his campaign stories; the country clergyman who trims his theology to please his patron Sir Roger; and Will Honeycomb, the fop and fortune hunter, who finally

weds a plain country girl and settles down to a quiet life. These minor personages of the club are employed to bring out more distinctly the engaging traits of Sir Roger and to give plausibility to the doings and sayings of the little group.

Addison's Style and Influence.—Addison succeeded, as no one before him had done, in writing prose that was at once idiomatic and polished. It is the easy, familiar, but refined style of the well-bred man of the world, who is at the same time something of the scholar. It is not a vigorous style, not epigrammatic. "He thinks justly," said Dr. Johnson, "but he thinks faintly." Addison perceived the possibilities of prose as a medium of artistic expression, with the result that he has left us some of the clearest and most graceful prose in the language. "Whoever wishes," says Johnson in an oft-quoted passage, "to attain an English style, familiar but not coarse, and elegant but not ostentatious, must give his days and nights to the study of Addison." He refined and polished his periods, taking great pains to express himself in a lucid manner. His sense for words is discriminating, and his appreciation of the telling adjustment of phrases is evident to the trained ear. Elegance and urbanity mark the style of Addison.

His contribution to our literature is noteworthy: (1) He and Steele introduced the light personal essay which was destined to become an important literary form; (2) the delightful character sketches of the Sir Roger de Coverley type contributed to the rise of the modern novel a little later; (3) by reconciling wit and virtue he gave a healthier moral tone to literature; and (4) he has left us a series of charming pictures of eighteenth-century social life in England. Incidentally, too, Addison made valuable contributions to the art of literary criticism through his papers on the style and diction of Milton, pointing out to his countrymen the beauties in certain neglected masterpieces. But above such considerations as style and influence is the more vital matter of reading Addison for pure enjoyment. After two hundred years, those who love *The Spectator* best think of Addison not as a classic,

but as a friend. His volumes are among the great companionable books of our literature.

RICHARD STEELE (1672-1729)

His Life.—Richard Steele, familiarly known as Dick Steele, was born in Dublin in 1672, the birth year of his friend and associate, Joseph Addison. Left an orphan at an early age, Steele was sent by an uncle to the Charter House School in London, where he met Addison, and later to Oxford. After a few years at the University, where he was an indifferent student, Steele went to London and joined the Horse Guards, playing soldier for ten years. While a member of this military organization he wrote a devotional manual called *The Christian Hero,* besides a play or two. He also attracted the attention of Lord Cutts, a well-known military man of the day, who introduced him to the wits and men of letters at the coffee-houses. During the next few years Steele wrote other plays, was made Official Gazetteer, and became a prominent figure in the literary life of London.

In 1709 Steele began the publication of *The Tatler;* two years later he planned with Addison a new journal of manners, letters, and morals, *The Spectator.* So great was the success of these two periodicals that he started others after the popularity of the original two had waned, but his later ventures were not successful because of their partisan tone. Steele now became an active politician, held several minor offices, was elected to Parliament, knighted, was sent on royal business to Scotland, and took part in various political movements of the day. He and Addison had a disagreement over a bill in Parliment about limiting the number of Peers, and bitterly attacked each other in rival journals. After Addison's death however, Steele's affection for his old friend showed itself in a generous tribute to his memory. The later years of his life were spent in promoting certain schemes for the public welfare and for his own private fortune. The estate left by his wife, who died 1718, was in Wales, and of this estate Steele wished to leave something intact to his children. He went to look after this property at Carmarthen in Wales; and there in 1729 he died and was buried.

His Personality.—Steele's father was English, his mother Irish; and in the son there was a curious blending of national traits, but the Irish were more pronounced. Impulsive, careless, inconsistent, warm-hearted, improvident, Steele was one of those characters who get close to the human heart. "His life was spent in sinning and repenting," says Macaulay; "in inculcating what was right, and doing what was wrong." He was one of the

most delightful companions in the London society of his day; but when his temper was aroused he could be one of the most caustic of critics. His humor was more rollicking and his pathos more moving than Addison's, as his wisdom was more genial than that of his serene and restrained friend. His vitality was as buoyant as his sympathies were broad; he entered with whole-hearted enjoyment into the life about him, a man of action with an immense capacity for social intercourse. He was courageous, with an instinct for social and political reform, a chivalrous defender of woman in an age of lax morals, a loyal friend, a good father and husband. What particularly impresses the student of Steele's life is the man's ceaseless activity, his abounding energy; and with it all there goes that saving irrepressible good nature, that human quality, which has made the world love him, if it does not revere him.

Steele's Works: Comedies and The Tatler.—Steele wrote four comedies with a moral purpose, the most important of these being *The Conscious Lovers*, which appeared in 1722. These plays mark the beginnings of that species of drama termed "sentimental comedy," the purpose of which was to give a moral and emotional tone to plays as opposed to the dissolute and cynical atmosphere of the Restoration Comedy of Manners, against which Jeremy Collier had successfully inveighed in 1698. But notwithstanding the temporary success of these comedies, Steele was not a dramatist, and posterity has all but forgotten that the lively essayist also wrote sentimental plays.

The fame of Sir Richard Steele rests almost entirely upon the periodical essays known collectively as *The Tatler*. Steele knew the town intimately and loved to mingle freely with the passing throngs of London life. He well understood their wants, he felt keenly enough his own pecuniary needs, and he had an ambition, no doubt, to enter a field whence he might exert a wider influence. Accordingly, on April 12, 1709, Steele issued the first number of *The Tatler* under the pseudonym of Isaac Bickerstaff, a name which he borrowed from Swift. The little double-column sheet was published three times a week up to January 2, 1711, at one

penny a copy. Of the two hundred and seventy-one numbers issued Steele wrote one hundred and eighty-eight, Addison wrote forty-two. The rest were contributed by friends, or by Addison and Steele together. The statement prefixed to the first collected volume of papers from *The Tatler* indicates the scope and the purpose of the undertaking:

> The general purpose of this paper is to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourse, and our behaviour.

The popularity of *The Tatler* led, as we have seen, to the establishment a little later of *The Spectator*. These two little papers lived only a few years as current periodicals, but they were the beginning of that vast magazine literature which has played so important a part in our social, literary, and political history. Steele was a somewhat hasty, careless writer; he was natural, vivacious, humorous, and never dull. His style is not as finished as Addison's, nor can he rise to the heights to which Addison sometimes attains; but the credit of originating an immensely vital form of literature really belongs to Steele. Addison enlarged and perfected what Steele had begun.

JONATHAN SWIFT (1667-1745)

His Life.—Jonathan Swift, the greatest prose-satirist in English literature, was born in Dublin in 1667 of English parentage. As his father died before he was born, Jonathan was taken charge of by an uncle who sent him to Kilkenny School, one of the best academies in Ireland, and later to Trinity College, Dublin University. Swift was an indifferent student, impatient under the restraints of scholastic life and little interested in the antiquated methods of study at the university. He read widely, however, and gave himself to investigations in a variety of social and political subjects, out of which his satires were later to develop. In 1689 Swift became private secretary to Sir William Temple, a kinsman of his who had a great country estate at Moor Park, Surrey, and who was living in scholarly retirement after long public service. In the household of Sir William Swift saw many distinguished men, and had access to a great library, of which he made constant use. Here he met Esther Johnson, then a mere child, who was afterwards to enter largely into his life. But the young man's

independent spirit could not endure the inferior position in his great kinsman's household, where he was often treated as a menial, though not unkindly; he had ambitions for larger recognition. Accordingly, in 1694 he left Sir William Temple's service in order to enter the Church. The next year or two he spent in Ireland in charge of a little country parish near Dublin; he returned to Moor Park in 1696 and remained with Sir William Temple as secretary until Temple's death in 1699. Now begins Swift's long battle with the world.

In 1700 he became vicar at Laracor, twenty miles from Dublin, with a salary of two hundred and thirty pounds a year and a small country congregation. This obscure place Swift held for more than ten years. Much of his time was spent in London during these years in the society of courtiers, politicians, and literary men. Originally a Whig, he turned Tory and attached himself to Bolingbroke and his colleagues in hope of preferment which he had in vain expected from the Whigs. Though prominent and even feared in the circles of the great men of the day, and though endowed with the keenest intellect in England, he failed to receive substantial political recognition, while he saw great places in the Church go to less able men.

The years 1710-1713 are those in which he reached his greatest power in London political and social life, where he was a genuine autocrat. Ministers of State paid court to him as to a dictator, for they feared his tongue and his pen. Of the great Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, Swift wrote to "Stella" (Esther Johnson): "One thing I warned him of, never to appear cold to me, for I would not be treated like a schoolboy." In fashionable drawing-rooms he was the center of interest, and few highborn ladies dared refuse his request that they sing or play for him, dreading his penetrating look, his frown, and his irony.

The Tories went out of power in 1713, and with their retirement Swift's chances of preferment were gone. A disappointed man, he railed with bitter satire on his enemies, becoming more violent, even venomous, in his attacks. It is likely that he had faint premonitions of that dread malady, insanity, which gradually overshadowed his life until its tragic close; and this will explain the growing despondency and violence during these years in London. This same year, 1713, he was offered and accepted the deanery of St. Patrick's, Dublin, a comparatively poor place in the esteem of a man who aspired to a bishopric in England. He spent the rest of his life as dean of St. Patrick's.

Three years before he received this appointment, Swift had begun his now famous *Journal to Stella.* This consists of a series of familiar letters in the form of a journal written to his former pupil Esther Johnson, in which all sorts of playful allusions and personal impressions of people and scenes in London served to relieve the usually somber spirit of this lonely man. He

throws off the masque of irony and talks confidentially to this woman who worshiped him and whom he nicknamed "Stella," "star" of his darkened life. This *Journal* reveals a tenderer heart than the world suspected the cold and haughty Dean possessed. Much has been written about Swift's relation to Esther Johnson; they may have been secretly married; certainly for thirty years Swift was devoted to her, and the association appears to have been a blameless one. Another woman, Hester Vanhomrigh, also plays a part in the romantic interests of Swift's life. She had been a pupil, too, and had been given the poetic name of "Vanessa" by Swift, though no warm attachment existed between the two. It is commonly said that Swift's blunt indifference, together with the impression that he was married to "Stella," killed Hester Vanhomrigh. However this may be, it is certain that the lives of two women were pathetically, even tragically, influenced by this outwardly unromantic man.

The last years of Swift's life were darkened by insanity, of which he had long had a presentiment. Years before while passing an old tree, he had said to his companion: "I shall die as that tree, from the top down." The prophecy came true: violent fits of madness seized him; at last he sank into an unrelieved torpor, and the ruins of his splendid intellect went down in silence. He died in 1745, and was buried in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. His small fortune went by his direction to found an asylum for the insane.

His Personality.—Swift is the most solitary figure of his century. The one bright experience of his life, a gleam of sunshine on a cloudy day, is his romantic attachment to Stella: the endearing expressions which abound in the *Journal*—desultory chit-chat, scraps of playful humor, touches of personal vanity—have done more to redeem the character of Swift from the charge of unrelieved cynicism and selfishness than all the brilliant products of his splendid intellect. Even this bitter satirist, this scornful pessimist, had his moments of tenderness. Pride and misanthropy —these are the dominant characteristics of the man as revealed in his formal writings; but we must not forget that he was no hypocrite. He smashed shams and he hated insincerity. But he went too far and became, as Horace Walpole said, "a wild beast who worried and baited all mankind almost, because his intolerable arrogance, vanity, pride, and ambition were disappointed."

His character is, indeed, full of inconsistencies and surprises; but the traits which determined the course of his life were not

those that give courage and hope; rather, they were the destructive passions of hatred, contempt, despair. He had no generous enthusiasms, no real geniality, no helpful sympathy. He was a mad jester who railed on his fellow men and whose philosophy of life was ignoble and essentially false, despite his immense genius. His life suggests a colossal tragedy: "an awful downfall and ruin," says Thackeray; "so great a man he seems to me, that thinking of him is like thinking of an empire falling."

His Works.—In his earlier years as secretary to Sir William Temple, Swift tried his hand at writing poetry, as all the literary men of that age did. But Swift was no poet, and he burned much of his earlier verse. The one piece of verse which deserves reading, because it has a certain personal interest, is *Cadenus and Vanessa* (1713), addressed to Hester Vanhomrigh ("Vanessa"). In this production Swift (*Cadenus* is an anagram of *Decanus*, Latin for Dean, referring of course to himself, then Dean of St. Patrick's) assumes the character of an older teacher to a pupil, and tries to reconcile "Vanessa" to the acceptance of a sort of paternal relationship toward her, rather than that of a lover.

The principal works of Swift are prose satires: *The Tale of a Tub, The Battle of the Books, Gulliver's Travels.* The first two were written at Sir William Temple's as early as 1698, though they were not published until 1704, and then anonymously. *The Tale of a Tub* takes its name, as Swift explains, from the custom sailors had of throwing out an empty tub to a whale about to attack the ship. So he throws out this *Tale of a Tub* to the critics who are attacking the ship of Church and State that he may divert their attention and save the ship. It seems, moreover, that formerly any rambling, improbable story, was sometimes called the "tale of a tub."

Swift's *Tale of a Tub* is the story of the fortunes of three brothers, Peter, Martin, and Jack, to each of whom their father had left a new coat with very explicit directions in his will as to how it should be worn. They are to live in harmony and simplicity, and they are not to change the fashion of their coats, no matter what the prevailing fashion at any one time may happen to be. But

gradually these brothers misinterpret their father's will, add all sorts of showy colors, top-knots and trimmings, until the original shape and color were quite changed. Peter is the most conspicuous offender in these respects, growing so scandalous in his disregard of his father's will that his two brothers resolve to leave him. Then the two brothers fall out with each other. Peter stands for the Church of Rome, Martin the Church of England, and Jack the Presbyterian, or Calvinist, Church. All this is told with many digressions and with an abundance of caustic wit. Swift's ostensible purpose in *The Tale of a Tub* was to defend the Church of England and to call attention to the shameful corruptions, abuses, and quarrels which divide Christianity; but he goes deeper and brings a bitter indictment against human nature, which he finds inherently depraved.

The Battle of the Books, the other short but powerful satire of Swift, is a mock-heroic account in the Homeric style of a fight between the Ancient books and the Modern books in the king's library. Sir William Temple, Swift's patron, was the advocate of the Ancients, and Richard Bentley, the greatest scholar of his age, the defender of the Moderns. The battle is won by the Ancients, inasmuch as Swift naturally sided with Temple, though in the actual controversy as to the relative merits of ancient and modern literature, which originated in France, the moderns had the better of it. *The Battle of the Books* is an exceedingly clever burlesque on pedantry. We do not find in English literature a more striking use of the "Homeric simile." As an illustration of this figure, the sentence which wittily sets forth the climax of the combat when Boyle, doughty champion of the Ancients, slays Bentley and Wotton, his antagonists, may be quoted:

> As when a slender cook has trussed a brace of woodcocks, he with iron skewer pierces the tender sides of both, their legs and wings close pinioned to their ribs, so was this pair of friends transfixed, till down they fell joined in their lives, joined in their deaths; so closely joined, that Charon would mistake them both for one, and waft them over Styx for half his fare.

The third and longest of Swift's great satires is *Gulliver's Travels*, published in 1726. This is of course by far the most famous

book he ever wrote, and it made his name familiar over Europe and in distant lands. *Gulliver's Travels* is first of all a pleasing story which has for many generations delighted young and old, but particularly the young, by its romance and its realism. Swift meant it to be a scathing satire on "that hated and detestable animal called man;" and so it is. But it is at the same time an original piece of brilliant imaginative narrative, so directly and so reasonably told, that even the very elect were sometimes inclined to regard it as a true record. Lemuel Gulliver's adventures among the Lilliputians, the little people, and among the Brobdingnagians the giants, seem almost as real as Robinson Crusoe's. Purged of certain coarse expressions and allusions, the first three parts of *Gulliver's Travels* make entertaining reading, in spite of the satire, which is happily lost on children; but the fourth part of the book becomes disgusting, for it reveals in all its grossness and violence Swift's contempt for English society in particular and for man in general. The Houyhnhnms[1] and Yahoos—horses endowed with reason, and bestial creatures of the Caliban type—are exceedingly repulsive; and the satire degenerates into a coarse and revolting attack on human depravity.

Among the miscellaneous writings of Swift are the *Bickerstaff Almanac*, the *Drapier Letters*, *A Modest Proposal*, and the interesting *Journal to Stella*. *The Bickerstaff Almanac* consists of a number of predictions for the year 1708, worked out and published the preceding year by Swift in imitation of the methods of the astrologers, a species of quacks in whom a great many people believed. Among these predictions was one in regard to the death of a popular charlatan named Partridge, which event Swift asserted would occur upon a certain day, sustaining his assertion by an elaborate proof according to the laws of the so-called science of astrology. Partridge vehemently protested that he was still alive after the day fixed for his death, but *Bickerstaff* (Swift) insisted that he was dead, proving the statement publicly by such convincing arguments—in which he was supported by other practical jokers

[1] Pronounced *whinnems*, in imitation of the horse's *whinny*.

of the day—that poor Partridge was actually laughed out of business in spite of his protests.

The Drapier Letters were written against a certain act of the English Parliament granting a patent to a man named Wood permitting him to coin copper halfpence for circulation among the Irish people, according to the terms of which it was believed that the people of Ireland would be seriously defrauded and Wood enriched. Swift wrote four letters, representing himself as a Dublin draper and arguing with shrewd sense and humor that the operation of the proposed scheme would mean the ruin of Ireland. The government in consequence recalled the odious contract and Swift became very popular with the Irish people. *A Modest Proposal* is the astounding proposition, set forth with great outward calm and moderation of style, that in view of the great poverty of Ireland, the young children of the country should be used for food. It is a hideous piece of irony, and represents Swift in his most bitter mood. The *Journal to Stella,* already mentioned, is particularly valuable as reflecting the social and political life of the day as commented upon by a keen observer without any thought of publication.

Swift's Literary Characteristics.—Jonathan Swift is by general consent the greatest prose satirist in our literature. He was a master of grim irony: his humor bites and cuts; his style is vigorous and clear, sinewy and pellucid, but wanting in beauty and gentleness. He has neither elevation nor real persuasiveness, and he is devoid of the inner sense for "sweetness and light"—an expression which he coined but does not illustrate. He excites our admiration, but he causes to spring up within our souls no great ideals. Yet, withal, Swift's writings are models of clear, strong English, and mark a distinct advance in our prose style. He thought straight and wrote with great precision.

Swift is noteworthy, moreover, as a forerunner of the English novel. By his vivid treatment of impossibilities, as illustrated in his *Gulliver's Travels,* he showed that he was gifted with an essential quality of the successful story-teller—the ability to invest with an atmosphere of reality the improbable and remote. He told

the story of Lemuel Gulliver's travels so plainly, so naturally, that many of his readers were almost convinced that it was true. Along with Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* and Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, *Gulliver's Travels* may be classed as an important contribution to the beginnings of our great stream of realistic prose fiction.

II. POETRY

Satiric and didactic verse prevailed in this period: there were few lyrics, no epics, no dramas. The "heroic couplet," used with telling effect by Dryden, was universally popular in the highly polished form to which it had now been brought by Pope and his imitators. The poetry of the day was intellectually clever, but wanting in depth and genuineness of feeling and in imaginative reach; made according to rule and dealing with social or well-worn philosophic themes, to which brilliant phrasing gave an air of novelty. Under the influence of Classicism, English poetry had become artificial and more or less mechanical, reflecting the outwardly refined but superficial taste of the town. It shows no real appreciation of nature, no love of bird and flower, of field and wood, no sympathy for the simple joys of the human heart. When these things are touched upon, it is with such a profusion of classical imagery in such stilted language that no definite and vital impression is conveyed. A wheatfield is "the wealth of Ceres," a red flower is a "blushing Flora," a spade is "a horticultural implement," women are "the fair sex," girls are "nymphs." As James Russell Lowell wittily remarks, "Everybody called everything something else." The atmosphere of the city drawing-room is found in the poetry; rhetorical figures lend a pleasing veneer to the language. The one poet in whom all the striking literary characteristics of the age are to be found is Alexander Pope, the successor of John Dryden, and the acknowledged high priest of poetic art in the earlier eighteenth century as Dryden was in the later seventeenth.

ALEXANDER POPE (1688-1744)

His Life.—Alexander Pope was born in London in 1688. His father was a well-to-do linen merchant, who made a comfortable fortune and retired dur-

ing Alexander's childhood to Binfield, on the edge of Windsor Forest. The family was Catholic, and because of the strong prejudice against this faith since the Revolution of 1688, the children of Catholic parents were not admitted to the great public schools. Pope's educational training was accordingly more or less unsystematic; he had private tutors and he read and studied by himself. He was, moreover, deformed and very delicate: physical weakness and seclusion made him sensitive and irritable. A remarkably precocious child, he early read such classics as Homer, Virgil, Ovid, and Horace, and he found delight in Spenser, Waller, and particularly in Dryden, whom he once saw at Will's Coffee-house. Pope began to make verses when a mere child:

> While yet a child, nor yet a fool to fame,
> I lisped in numbers, for the numbers came.

Although the youthful poet had written much verse by the time he was of age, his earliest notable productions are the *Pastorals*, published in 1709, but written when he was sixteen. Other poems on classical models and with an abundance of classical mythology followed; but not until 1711, upon the appearance of the *Essay on Criticism*, was his reputation as a poet established. From this time on his life was that of the professional man of letters, devoted singly to literature.

In 1718 Pope moved to Twickenham, a little country town on the Thames between Windsor and London, where he had bought a small estate. This he converted into an attractive villa with trim gardens laid out in the French fashion of Versailles; he constructed a tunnel under a road on the place and gave the name of "grotto" to it, adorning this subterranean retreat with shells and pieces of glass until the walls bristled and glittered. Here the poet received his distinguished friends, for he had now become the foremost poet of his day.

With most of his colleagues he sooner or later quarreled. His first serious difference was with Wycherley, the dissolute old Restoration dramatist, whose verses he criticised so severely that Wycherley would have nothing more to do with the young poetic autocrat. Then followed disagreements with the critic Dennis, with Addison, with Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, and finally with Bolingbroke. With Swift and Arbuthnot—Arbuthnot, truest, most generous, and wisest of friends—he had no serious quarrels. These two were fellow-members of the Scriblerus Club, a little society projected for the purpose of writing satires on the life and works of an imaginary personage, "Martin Scriblerus," noted for his dullness.

Revered as the first poet of the age and surrounded by a group of wits, among whom were a few real friends, Pope spent his last years as peacefully as his somewhat peevish temper and diseased body would permit him.

He called his life "a long disease," and it was so indeed. Worn out at last, he received his friends in bed, and had a kind word and a smile for each of them. The end came peacefully, May 30, 1744, and a few days later he was buried in Twickenham Church near his villa on the Thames.

His Personality.—Pope was a little, nervous man, with frail, deformed body and a keen intellect. All his life he was afflicted with physical disease, which naturally made his temper irritable and his tongue sharp. Dr. Johnson gives this account of his

POPE'S VILLA AT TWICKENHAM

physical weakness: "When he rose, he was invested in a bodice made of stiff canvass, being scarcely able to hold himself erect till it was laced, and he then put on a flannel waistcoat. One side was contracted. His legs were so slender that he enlarged their bulk with three pair of stockings, which were drawn on and off by a maid." Closely allied to his physical weakness was a species of mental disease which rendered him morbidly jealous and suspicious, and caused him to be at times utterly unscrupulous in his utterances. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, to whom Pope had

written gallant verses in the manner of a lover to his mistress, at last fell out with him, characterizing him as the "wicked wasp of Twickenham."

In spite of his petty intrigues, his slanders, his distortion of facts, his jealousies, and his invectives, Pope was true to such men as Arbuthnot and Swift, and always devoted to his old mother, who died at an advanced age in 1733. She wrote to him almost daily, and the burden of her little letters was this: "I send you my daily prayers, and I bless you, my deare." Pope was the center of a circle of wits such as no other English writer of the time could command, and he gave forth laws to his "listening senate" in the manner of old John Dryden, his model, who, as Fielding said, "died in a good old age, possessed of the Kingdom of Wit, and was succeeded by King Alexander, surnamed Pope." Sometimes we feel contempt for his vanity and his deceit; oftener, perhaps, we have a sense of pity for his diseased body and of admiration for his brilliant intellect.

His Works.—The principal works of Alexander Pope are the *Essay on Criticism* (1711), *Rape of the Lock* (1712, revised in 1714), *Windsor Forest and the Temple of Fame* (1713), *Translation of Homer* (1715–1726), *The Dunciad* (1728 in three books, with fourth book in 1742), *Essay on Man* (1733), *Imitations of Horace* (1739), *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot.*

Pope's literary career began in 1709 with the publication of the *Pastorals*, a series of eclogues on the seasons quite in the classical manner. The most striking thing about these earlier poems is not the imagery—which is conventional, and to the modern reader absurd, because of the use of Greek and Latin divinities in an English setting,—but the smoothness and clever phrasing. The *Essay on Criticism*, however, made a decided hit. Here was a didactic poem setting forth in polished and quotable lines the old established rules of literary criticism as reflecting the opinions of that arbiter of French taste, Boileau, from whom Dryden had gained so much in the preceding age. There is certainly no originality of thought here, but there is novelty of expression; we have brilliant epigram in couplets which stick in the memory. Here are

a few familiar lines, which speedily became current coin in our English speech:

> For fools rush in where angels fear to tread.
>
> A little learning is a dangerous thing;
> Drink deep, or taste not the Pierian spring.
>
> To err is human, to forgive divine.
>
> First follow nature and your judgment frame
> By her just standard, which is still the same.
> In words, as fashions, the same rule will hold;
> Alike fantastic, if too new, or old:
> Be not the first by whom the new are tried,
> Nor yet the last to lay the old aside.

The *Essay on Criticism* was widely praised, the French critics declaring that at last England had a "correct" poet. The gist of the poem is that an author should follow nature as "methodised" —trimmed down and reduced to order—by the rules of classic art.

Pope's next poem, the *Rape of the Lock*, literally took the town by storm. The occasion of the poem was this: a young nobleman, Lord Petre, had clipped off a lock of Miss Arabella Fermor's hair. Now Miss Fermor was a celebrated beauty of the day, and this theft of one of her curls made her indignant with the noble lord and resulted in coolness between the families. The incident was related to Pope, with suggestion that he write a poem and by making the trivial happening appear absurd restore good feeling. Out of this grew the *Rape of the Lock*, the greatest mock-heroic poem in our literature. The action covers one day in the life of a London lady of fashion: the rising at twelve, the making of the elaborate toilet, the journey from the city to Hampton Court in a gayly decked boat on the Thames, filled with belles and beaux among whom "Belinda" (Miss Fermor) is queen; the social diversions at the party, the clipping of the lock with the dire consequences; and finally, the passing of the fateful lock of Belinda's hair to the skies to become a shining constellation. All

the social trivialities of the time are touched upon in the poem—lap dogs, card games, coffee-drinking, billets-doux, puffs, powders, patches, pomatums, and the rest. An army of spirits—sprites, sylphs, gnomes, and salamanders, which, according to the Rosicrucians, a fantastic sect of the day, make up the four elements—watch and influence the contest in the manner of the gods at the battles in the Trojan war. In witty burlesque fashion the machinery of a classic epic is employed to describe *ombre*, the favorite card game of the period, and the battle which follows the theft of the famous lock of hair. No more clever social satire, with brilliant epigram and absurd contrasts, exists in our literature.

Pope's *Translation of Homer*, upon which he was engaged about ten years, was exceedingly popular in an age which was devoted to the rhyming couplet and artificial language. We of to-day, who love simplicity and strength in poetry rather than glitter and jingle, feel as Richard Bentley, the finest classical scholar of that day, did when he said to Pope, "It is a pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer." Pope made a small fortune out of this translation, which, in spite of its defects, has held a secure place as an English classic. He took great pains with his version of the *Iliad*, polishing it and revising it; but he translated only half of the *Odyssey*, the last twelve books being the work of the two Cambridge scholars, Broome and Fenton. Indeed, the movement of the *Iliad* story, with its battles and quarrels, was better suited to the temperament of Pope than the quieter, more idyllic narrative of the *Odyssey*, with its charm of sea horizons and pastoral landscapes. Pope was not an accurate scholar and had to rely much upon the learning of others; and yet, in spite of its manifest limitations, his translation of the *Iliad* is a spirited performance, certain passages of which reproduce with telling effect the action of the original poem.

The *Dunciad* is an Iliad of Dunces, or "scribblers," as Pope and his coterie called their literary enemies. In the *Dunciad* he impales the victims of his scorn or wrath, and often very unjustly, as, for instance, when he puts among the dunces Bentley, Whitefield, and Defoe—men of great ability with more real wisdom and

learning than Pope had. As a whole the *Dunciad* is tiresome reading to-day, since many of the men attacked are obscure and many allusions are incomprehensible to later generations without elaborate notes, which are a weariness of the flesh. As a species of personal satire it has high literary merits, but the laughter which followed its publication sounds hollow, if it sounds at all, through the two centuries which separate us from the petty quarrels which provoked this pamphlet in verse. Byron imitated it in the earlier years of the nineteenth century in his *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, but comparatively few care for it to-day.

The *Essay on Man* addressed to Henry St. John, Lord Bolingbroke, is a professedly philosophical poem on the general proposition, "Whatever is, is right." Pope, as Sir Leslie Stephen has remarked, "thought and felt by electric shocks and flashes;" this was due, no doubt, to his physical weakness which made sustained intellectual effort impossible. The *Essay on Man* consists of a series of reflections on man's relation to God, to himself, to the universe, and to society, the announced purpose being to "vindicate the ways of God to Man"—an echo of Milton's well-known line near the beginning of *Paradise Lost*. The philosophy of the *Essay on Man* is superficial, dogmatic, and general, but it greatly pleased the wits of the day and was widely read over the continent of Europe. The champions of religious orthodoxy saw in Pope's conclusions, however, certain alarming heresies, especially since Voltaire had praised the poem, and they made the poet uncomfortable by their attacks. In order to placate them he wrote "The Universal Prayer," the noblest of his utterances. The *Essay on Man* has many fine passages; as a whole it has more elevation than any other of his didactic poems; and it contains many lines which have become familiar quotations. These, for example:

> Vice is a monster of so frightful mien,
> As, to be hated, needs but to be seen;
> Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,
> We first endure, then pity, then embrace.

Honor and shame from no condition rise;
Act well your part: there all the honor lies.

For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
He can't be wrong whose life is in the right.

Know then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.

Hope springs eternal in the human breast:
Man never is, but always to be blest.

The *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* deserves reading as a tribute to Pope's constant friend, Arbuthnot, and as a sort of defense of his own life. Here he reveals the motives and struggles of his literary career.

Pope's Literary Characteristics and Influence.—The poetry of Pope is an epitome of the Age of Anne; it reflects in compact and polished epigram the social whims, the philosophic vagaries, the political jealousies, the literary ideals of that interesting period. And Pope was its supreme interpreter. On the throne of poetry, such as it was, he sat absolute monarch. He was a professional man of letters, giving his whole time to writing and supporting himself by his pen, as no other eminent author had done up to this time.

Pope is the supreme master of the heroic couplet, that form to which Dryden first gave distinction, and he is master of the poetry of social satire. Satiric and didactic verse reached its perfection in his work; and the influence of Classicism is seen at its best. He is the architect of the perfect couplet, the artist of the finished line. His poetry sparkles with the wit of antithesis: contrast, balance, the apt rhyme, the apt phrase, the magic coinage of the commonplace into portable currency—these are the distinctive marks of the poetry of Pope. It is not original in thought, it is not suggestive, it has no uplifting power, stirs no generous emotions, kindles no fine enthusiasms, inspires no moral ardor; but of its kind it is unsurpassed.

Pope's own contemporaries held him in high esteem as a poet; in the succeeding generation Dr. Johnson said to Boswell that "a

thousand years may elapse before there shall appear another man with a power of versification equal to that of Pope." The "power of versification" was indeed possessed by Pope to a high degree, although we may not call him an inspired poet capable, like Milton, of building the "lofty rhyme." For fifty years or more, at any rate, Alexander Pope was the model of English poets, and his influence extended even to Byron, who lived in the very midst of that great Romantic movement which was a reaction against the school of Pope.

Minor Poets.—Of the several minor poets, who are sometimes called collectively the "School of Pope," Matthew Prior and John Gay deserve some notice. MATTHEW PRIOR (1664-1721) was educated at Cambridge, held several public offices, was made ambassador to France, wrote a volume of poems, and spent his last years on a country estate presented to him by an admirer. He is buried in Westminster Abbey "under a monument for which he had the vanity to pay five hundred pounds." Though Prior wrote several long poems which were praised by contemporary readers, but which are dull reading to-day, he is famous in literature for his shorter poems of lyric quality, such as "To a Child of Quality Five Years Old," graceful verses showing his courtly wit.

JOHN GAY (1685-1732) "seems to have begun his life," says his biographer, "under the impression that it was somebody's duty to provide for him in the world, and this impression clung to him through nearly the whole of a lifetime." Left an orphan at an early age, he was educated by friends, then acted as secretary to several prominent members of the nobility, was generously befriended by Pope and other literary men. He seems to have had a sort of childlike guilelessness and want of responsibility, depending for his maintenance on friends whom his pleasing personality had drawn to him. His epitaph in Westminster Abbey, composed by himself, illustrates the superficiality of his nature:

> Life is a jest, and all things show it;
> I thought so once, and now I know it.

The most interesting of Gay's works to the reader of to-day are *The Fables*, little moral stories in imitation of the poems of the

French writer La Fontaine; *Trivia*, wonderfully minute pictures of London street-life in the eighteenth century; the song, or ballad "Black-eyed Susan," one of the best lyrics of that artificial age; and *The Beggar's Opera*, a popular burlesque of the species of Italian opera which was a fad in London at the time and of which men of letters made much fun. The popularity of *The Beggar's Opera* was due in part to its clever local political hits. The verse of Prior and Gay is smooth and graceful, but in keeping with the spirit of this social age it does not go beneath the surface.

Connecting this group with the pioneer Romantic poets (see page 278) is EDWARD YOUNG (1684-1765), whose long and rather tedious moralizing poem, *Night Thoughts*, was once widely read.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1700-1740)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. PROSE	
Joseph Addison (1672-1719): The Spectator, 1711	Reign of Queen Anne, 1702-1714
Richard Steele: The Tatler, 1709	
Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Satirist: Tale of a Tub, Battle of the Books, Gulliver's Travels (1726)	Reigns of George I and II, 1714-1760
First Daily Newspaper The Courant), 1702	Battle of Blenheim, 1704
Defoe's Review, 1704	Beginning of Cabinet Government under Walpole, first Prime Minister, 1721
II. POETRY	
Alexander Pope (1688-1744): Satires, Didactic Poems, Translations: Rape of the Lock, Essay on Man, Duncaid, Translation of Homer	Rise of Methodism (Wesley's Preaching) 1739
Matthew Prior and John Gay, writers of graceful lyrics and society verse	War of Austrian Succession, 1740-1748

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:—Triumph of Classicism; Rise of Periodical Literature; Social Age: Politics and Literature closely related; Modern Prose.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical and Social.—Morris's The Age of Queen Anne (Epochs of History Series), Lecky's History of England in the Eighteenth Century, McCarthy's The Reign of Queen Anne, Besant's London in the Eighteenth Century, Ashton's Social Life in the Reign of Queen Anne (an interesting and valuable work), Thackeray's Henry Esmond (reproduces the atmosphere of the period).

Literary.—Gosse's Eighteenth Century English Literature, (Macmillan), Perry's Eighteenth Century Literature, Stephen's English Literature in the Eighteenth Century, Minto's Manual of English Prose Literature (Ginn), Dennis' The Age of Pope (Macmillan), Lives of Addison, Steele, Swift, and Pope, in English Men of Letters Series.—Selections from the works of earlier eighteenth century writers may be found in "Everyman's Library," or in numerous inexpensive annotated school editions.

CHAPTER NINE

THE MIDDLE AND LATER EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

1740-1798

I. RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL
II. JOHNSON AND HIS CIRCLE
III. BEGINNINGS OF ROMANTICISM

Political and Industrial Expansion.—About the middle of the eighteenth century a change came over the political and industrial life of England which resulted in the rapid development of the nation into a world empire. The first forty years of the century were politically corrupt, low and commonplace ideals prevailing in public office. Sir Robert Walpole was for more than twenty years head of the government, a shrewd, practical, and prosaic man, corrupt in methods, convinced that "every man has his price," and thoroughly cynical about public and private virtue. Without imagination himself, Walpole laughed to scorn all professions of patriotism and generous sentiment; he regarded all men as thoroughly selfish and public office as an opportunity for private gain. This low political and social attitude was, as we have seen, reflected in the literature of the day—in Pope's complacent tone, with its implied contempt for man's nobler nature, and still more disagreeably in Swift's bitter satire. But with the fall of the Walpole administration in 1742, the old narrow-minded policies gave place to more enlightened views as to the duties of public leaders.

William Pitt was animated by loftier ideals; he was a lover of his country and an enthusiastic believer in a greater Britain. England was ready for a reaction against the insular policies of Walpole, and readily responded to the appeals of Pitt for united

efforts in the direction of colonial expansion. Since the notable victories of Marlborough in Queen Anne's day the nation had been at peace; she had been growing rich at home, devoting her energies to building up her internal resources. The merchant, or trading-class, of whom Sir Andrew Freeport in *The Spectator* is a typical representative, had become rich and in consequence very influential. The wealth of England had enormously increased. Material prosperity made the people indifferent to higher things for a while; but the spirit of idealism never wholly perishes in the Englishman. As it was in the days of Elizabeth, so it came to be in the days of Pitt: provincial pride was fanned into a flame of glowing patriotism by war and exploration; victories in the far East and in the West, the voyages of Anson and Cook, meant the ultimate supremacy of England in India and Australia and Canada. Clive had won a notable victory at Plassey in 1757, and Wolfe had captured Quebec in 1759; Captain Cook's voyages a little later opened new lands in the Pacific, and Australia became a part of the British empire. Thus, at home the nation felt the quickening impulse of the discovery and taking of new lands, and modern England was definitely committed to her policy of splendid imperialism.

Religious and Philanthropic Enthusiasm.—The middle and later eighteenth century is notable also for an awakening of the English conscience and heart through the preaching of such great religious reformers as John Wesley and George Whitefield and such philanthropists as John Howard and William Wilberforce. The rise of Methodism was the result of a reaction against the coldness and formalism of the English Church during the later seventeenth century and earlier eighteenth, when lax morals and low ideals were common among the clergy. As Puritanism had been a protest against religious corruption in the seventeenth century, so was Methodism in the eighteenth, but with a difference. Puritanism had been a movement for greater individual liberty, religious, political, social—an effort to purify national life; Methodism was a strictly religious movement, an effort to arouse the Church to greater spiritual activity, to revive and democratize the Church.

The influence of the itinerant preaching of Wesley and Whitefield was felt not only in the churches of Great Britain, but in the social and intellectual life of the day as well. This great religious revival helped to restore emotion to its proper place in the lives of Englishmen after the intellectual chill and skeptical atmosphere of the shallow philosophy of Bolingbroke, Chesterfield, and other leaders in early eighteenth century thought.

A new birth of sympathy followed, showing itself in various kinds of social reform, the most noteworthy being the labors of John Howard, the philanthropist, for the betterment of English prisons, and of William Wilberforce for the abolition of slavery in British dominions. Howard visited the jails of England, bringing cheer into darkened and germ-breeding dungeons and exposing the criminal neglect of officials. All these reforms quickened the conscience of the nation and contributed to that wonderful revival in literature called Romanticism, which we shall presently consider.

Newer Social Ideals.—The great social upheaval in France, known as the French Revolution, and the desire for political liberty among the American colonies, resulting in the Declaration of Independence and a new republic, were manifestations of the passion for democracy and the rights of the individual which changed the spirit of English literature in the later eighteenth century. The French writer Rousseau had insistently pleaded for a "return to nature" and the "rights of man," and his books had much to do with the spread of the new gospel of democracy. A deeper sense of human brotherhood stirred the sympathies of men for the unfortunate and the oppressed; the worth and dignity of the individual came to be felt as never before; political and personal freedom was passionately advocated in the use of the magic words, "liberty, equality, fraternity" Compassion and sympathy for man and beast succeeded the restrained and conventional feeling of the earlier eighteenth century; practical reforms were enthusiastically begun, and the speedy coming of a Golden Age, when the dream of the brotherhood of man would be realized, was rapturously proclaimed.

Society was to be reorganized, the burdened laborer was to be free from poverty, and the individual man was to be fully recognized in the new social order.

It was an age of revolution over western Europe, violent in France, bloodless in England, but none the less significant of a changing attitude of mind toward the rights of the individual and the relation of man to nature. As we shall see, English poetry in particular begins to reflect these newer social ideals in the latter half of the century; at its close the tone of our poetry has changed entirely. The most notable contribution of the eighteenth century, however, is the English novel.

I. RISE OF THE ENGLISH NOVEL

Forerunners of the Novel.—The art of story-telling had been practiced for ages before the rise of the modern novel. Stories of one kind and another, in verse and in prose, are to be found in the literatures of all peoples. In our own literature we have noted the thrilling exploits of Beowulf, the knightly adventures in the metrical romances of the middle ages, particularly those of the Arthurian legends, the stories retold by Chaucer in the *Canterbury Tales,* and the romantic, frankly unreal narratives of Sidney, Lyly, Nash, Greene, Lodge, and Peele, among the Elizabethans. In the Elizabethan Age it was the drama and not the so-called novel which reflected real life and human nature as we recognize it everywhere. Up to the eighteenth century it may be said, in general, that the writers of stories long or short were chiefly concerned with narratives of incident more or less unreal, and not with character and everyday life such as we observe in homely scenes, where actual men and women have their joys and sorrows and struggles.

A popular form of prose fiction during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was the "romance of roguery," or "picaresque novel," (from *picaro,* the Spanish word for rogue), in which some impudent but clever rascal is made to pass through a series of diverting adventures in which he is always outwitting somebody

and having hairbreadth escapes. In these books the interest lies in the incident, the trick played, the action; the story is a string of adventures, without unity and without probability. There had been in France interminable romances about the love-making of courtiers who pined away at the neglect of disdainful ladies and were rewarded at the end of the tenth volume. But these were not transcripts from life; the common man had no share in them; he was not interested in the doings of characters remote from his world.

With the rise of periodicals in the early eighteenth century, however, literature became more intimately concerned with the thoughts and feelings of the "average man": the influence of coffee-houses, clubs, theaters, and particularly of woman, made the prose of the day more distinctly social. This is manifest in the character-sketches of *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, which contributed to the rise of the novel of domestic life. There are three works, however, which are in a more definite sense the forerunners of the novel—*Pilgrim's Progress*, *Gulliver's Travels*, and *Robinson Crusoe*. Each of these books must have seemed to the sturdy middle-class Englishman who read them to reflect something of his own sentiments. At any rate, they came within the range of his possible experience; such things might happen to him; the hero in each case seemed human enough, even though his adventures were beyond the ordinary. It required no literary and high social culture to understand such books as these; here, then, was democratic literature. It was not hard to imagine yourself Christian, or Crusoe, or even Gulliver, so realistically was the story of their travels told. They were everyday Englishmen, journeying for a time "in a far country," where strange things might be expected to happen.

From such humanized tales of adventure to the story of domestic trials amid English scenes—the countryside, the village, London—was the next step, a long step, perhaps, but a natural one. The man who is most representative of this transition stage in English prose fiction, the pioneer of the modern novel, is Daniel Defoe.

DANIEL DEFOE (1661-1731)

His Life.—Daniel Defoe was born in London about 1661. His father, James Foe, was a well-to-do butcher, and belonged to the growing number of religious Dissenters, a class toward whom little tolerance was shown at that time. The son assumed the aristocratic prefix "De" when he was about forty, and his surname became Defoe instead of Foe. Defoe's father intended that his son should be a dissenting minister, and sent him to a neighboring academy to be educated, but the boy had no special liking for that vocation, and probably left school before completing the prescribed course. Little, indeed, is certainly known about his life during these earlier years; the extent and variety of his knowledge warrant us in believing, however, that he was a diligent reader and an uncommonly keen observer.

After leaving the academy Defoe engaged in several commercial enterprises, all of which seem to have been unsuccessful. Meanwhile he had become interested in politics, taking part in the Dúke of Monmouth's rebellion in 1685, and later writing pamphlets in favor of William of Orange, by whom as William III he was in 1694 given a government position. He was in the government service for several years, always loyal to the king in whose defense he wrote a flattering poem called the *True-born Englishman.* In 1697 he had written an *Essay on Projects,* a work, it will be remembered, to which Benjamin Franklin expressed his indebtedness in the formation of a clear style.

Defoe's blunt satire, *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters,* written in 1702 against Tories and High Churchmen and in grim defense of the Dissenters, caused such indignation that Defoe was put into the public pillory for a day and then sent to prison for a year. Released through the intercession of a prominent Tory nobleman, Defoe was sent to Scotland on a secret mission for the government. In 1704 he established his now famous *Review,* the brilliant articles in which gained him favor with the Whigs. He was now playing a difficult game: at heart he was a Whig, but he was under obligations to the Tories. He succeeded for a while, but was finally tried for libels against the House of Hanover. Too shrewd to suffer long, Defoe made his peace with the Whigs and returned to his editorial-writing and pamphleteering. After publishing an astonishing number of magazine articles and pamphlets on all sorts of subjects he finally turned his attention to writing stories. *Robinson Crusoe,* which appeared in 1719-'20, was the beginning of a long list of novels of adventure.

Defoe was now at the height of his prosperity. He held a government position which, together with the proceeds from his various publications, enabled him to live in comfort and project certain promising business schemes. At Stoke Newington near London he built a house, had his coach and liveried servants, and did some farming, while he directed several busi-

ness enterprises in the city. But Defoe was not a successful business man: reverses came at length, his debts accumulated, and his creditors harassed him. To escape these he fled to some obscure place, from which he wrote from time to time gloomy letters. These last years we know little about. The old man, worn out with his many strenuous labors and his misfortunes, died in 1731, and was buried in Bunhill Fields Cemetery, London, not far from John Bunyan. A monument erected by the children of many lands marks the grave of the author of *Robinson Crusoe*.

His Personality.—The energy and versatility of Defoe remind us of the men of Elizabeth's day, of whom Raleigh is typical, though the imaginative splendor of those great times was not Defoe's. He is a curious compound of duplicity and virtue. As Professor Minto remarks, "sometimes pure knave seems to be uppermost, sometimes pure patriot; but the mixture is so complex, and the energy of the man so restless, that it almost passes human skill to unravel the two elements."[1] Defoe was a lonely man in an extremely social age; he did not frequent coffee-houses, as did Addison and Steele; he had few friends; he was restless and somewhat solitary and not unlike his own Robinson Crusoe. In spite of his infirmities, however, he has endeared himself in a peculiarly personal way to succeeding generations through his gift of realistic story-telling and his remarkable human sympathy.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—Defoe is the author of about two hundred and fifty publications, an amazing literary output for a man engaged in business and politics. Many of these works are of course pamphlets on questions of the day and now without interest except to the historian. Of his works other than fiction the most interesting to-day are the essays in *The Review* on all manner of subjects, contributed during nine years (1704–1713), the *Essay upon Projects* (in which is outlined in somewhat modern fashion a scheme for a woman's college), and *The Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, in which Defoe, himself a Dissenter, ironically suggests that these troublesome religionists be put to death. But far beyond all these in interest are his works of fiction beginning with *Robinson Crusoe*, written in 1719 when he was nearly sixty.

[1] Life of Defoe. *English Men of Letters*, p. 167

Robinson Crusoe is based on the experience of Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch sailor, deserted by his companions on a lonely island off the coast of Chili in 1704, but discovered five years later and taken back to England. His story excited great interest and sympathy throughout England. Defoe visited Selkirk at Bristol and so did Steele, who wrote an account of Selkirk's adventures in *The Englishman*. Starting with this bit of truth, Defoe constructed the entertaining story of *Robinson Crusoe*, so realistic, so direct, so human withal, that two centuries have read it with delight. It is our first novel of incident. Told in a perfectly straightforward manner, unadorned, reasonable, the narrative reads like a recital of fact. Its popularity was unprecedented: edition after edition was brought out, and the demand was not satisfied. The great middle class read and understood it; each reader put himself in the place of Crusoe just as Defoe had done, and each applied, consciously or unconsciously, the lesson of the story—the reward of patience, honesty, and labor. Defoe very cleverly made use of the memoir-form along with the diary, the narrative method which most readily gives the impression of truthfulness. He professes to edit these ad-

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF THE FRONTISPIECE TO THE FIRST EDITION OF *Robinson Crusoe*

ventures, and assures the reader in utmost frankness that he believes "the things to be a just history of fact."

Other novels of adventure rapidly followed: *The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton* (1720), *Moll Flanders* (1722), *The History of Captain Jack* (1722), and *Roxana* (1724). These are narratives centering about some notorious adventurer, or thief, or courtesan, the originals of whom Defoe had probably studied in the London courts and slums. The stories of their wanderings, vices, trials, escapes, are told with a detail and frankness that invest them with an atmosphere as truthful as it is oppressive. Of these *Moll Flanders* is perhaps the most powerful; *Captain Singleton* is in places as entertaining an account of African explorations as the books of Stanley. *The Memoirs of a Cavalier* is so much like history that some critics still contend that it is an authentic record.

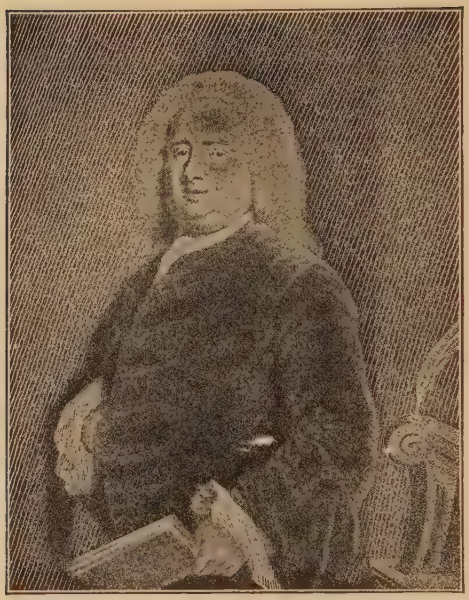
The most astonishingly plausible piece of prose fiction which Defoe wrote is the little story called *The Apparition of Mrs. Veal* (1706), an account of the alleged appearance of a Mrs. Veal the day following her own death to a certain Mrs. Bargrave at Canterbury, September 8, 1705. The evidence is so circumstantial, the style so deliberate and concrete, so much is made of a certain "scoured silk gown" worn by the ghostly lady, that the mystification is complete: "Then Mrs. Watson cried out, 'you have seen her indeed, for none knew but Mrs. Veal and myself that the gown was scoured.' " Defoe had disarmed the incredulity of his readers by a preface in which he set forth with great minuteness the direct nature of his information and the entirely trustworthy character of his informants. The story is as clever a hoax as Swift's prediction of the death of Partridge, already mentioned.

The Journal of the Plague Year (1722) is a record of the terrible plague in London during 1665, purporting to have been written by an eyewitness. Though even now sometimes classified as history, it is, of course, a work of the imagination, for Defoe was only four or five years old when the plague raged and had no recollection of it. Yet so awful, so ghastly are the daily scenes depicted in the *Journal* with such careful detail, that the work

reads like a newspaper report of actual conditions in the London streets.

The most obvious characteristic of Defoe's style is its simplicity; there is no adornment. He can tell a plain tale without marring it with ornament. He was able to get the point of view of each of his characters, to put himself in another's place, to write of that other's experience as if it were his very own. He shaped his problem into a personal equation and then solved it by asking himself the question, What would I do under these circumstances? The result was realism. He worked out his details with great care, and thus impressed his readers with his fairness and his accuracy. He had the instinct of a journalist. The illusion of reality was made stronger, moreover, by his adroitly worded prefaces, in which he took his readers into his confidence. In *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe achieved his greatest triumph: from such a narrative of incident to the novel of character was just one more step.

The Novel Proper.—A Defoe story consists of a series of adventures through which a certain individual passes. The interest is in what happens, or the incident. The material which Defoe uses is taken from everyday life and is natural enough, but the scenes and the happenings are often beyond the range of his reader's knowledge—they do not reflect life as he knows it. Now, the novel, as we understand the word to-day, is a picture of actual life under more or less familiar conditions; it is a realistic presentation in artistic form of a small section of life. There must be a plot developed logically by the laws of cause and effect out of a given situation; interest must be maintained through the play of character on character and the introduction of incidents and new situations; finally some sort of climax is reached and the complication is relieved. Unity is obtained by skilfully combining the various threads of the story, grouping the characters about the hero or heroine, and excluding irrelevant episodes. Characters, plots, and setting produce a general harmony of effect; and the whole is so like real life that the reader is convinced that it actually happened or might happen. This, in brief, is the ideal plan of the modern novel.



SAMUEL RICHARDSON

In the transition from the narrative of adventure to the novel proper there was a shift of emphasis from incident to character and manners: a small section of English domestic life was realistically treated by Samuel Richardson in his story *Pamela*, which appeared in 1740. *Pamela*, though by no means conforming perfectly to the ideal plan of a novel just set forth, is commonly regarded as the first genuine modern novel. Contemporary with Richardson is Henry Fielding, a still greater novelist; then come Smollett and Sterne.

SAMUEL RICHARDSON (1689-1761)

His Life.—Samuel Richardson was born in Derbyshire in 1689. His father was a joiner, a deeply religious man who destined his son for the Church. Means were lacking, however, and Samuel was apprenticed at seventeen to a London printer. So industrious was he and so thrifty that after a few

years he set up in business for himself, prospered, bought a country house in a London suburb, and spent the rest of his life there. As a boy in Derbyshire, Richardson was a favorite with the young ladies of his neighborhood, who confided their love affairs to him and got him to write their love letters. He was of a sympathetic disposition, could keep a secret, was resourceful in matters of sentiment, and gifted in the art of letter-writing. It is not surprising, therefore, that throughout his life he was the center of a circle of adoring women, who "listened to him implicitly and did not venture to contradict his opinions." The rotund and rosy little printer, plump and prosperous, endured with great complacency the flatteries of his feminine admirers, sympathizing, advising, and directing their correspondence. He was himself from his boyhood fond of writing long letters; as an apprentice in London he wrote regularly and in great detail to a gentleman of taste and learning in his native county who had befriended him. All this was excellent preparation for his future work.

In 1739, when he was fifty years old, two London publishers asked Richardson to write a number of letters on the concerns of ordinary life to serve as models for untrained country people who would like to acquire the art of letter-writing. These were to form a small volume, for which the publishers felt there would be a large demand. One of the first of these model letters was supposed to be from a young woman named Pamela who was employed as a waiting-maid in a prominent country family. Instead of following the original plan, Richardson conceived the idea of telling the story of the girl's experiences by means of a series of letters written by her to her parents. Out of this grew the first English novel, *Pamela; or Virtue Rewarded*, published in 1740. So successful was this venture that two other novels followed. Richardson, whose outward life was uneventful, died in 1761.

His Novels.—Richardson wrote three novels, *Pamela* (1740), *Clarissa Harlowe* (1748), and *Sir Charles Grandison* (1753). *Pamela*—the story of how a maidservant won for a husband a wild young man and reformed him, all through her prudent conduct,—was originally published in four duodecimo volumes; *Clarissa Harlowe*—which depicts the trials and tragic fate of a beautiful woman pursued by an accomplished libertine—was published in seven; and so was *Sir Charles Grandison*—which embodies the conception of a perfect gentleman who rescues a charming young lady from a wild gallant. In the first two novels the central character is a woman, while in the third it is a man. In *Pamela* the heroine belongs to the humbler class of society, in

Clarissa Harlowe the heroine is of the upper middle class, in *Sir Charles Grandison* the hero is a member of the aristocracy. Of the three novels the strongest is *Clarissa Harlowe*, a masterly piece of psychological analysis. A woman's heart is the subject, and on such a theme Richardson's long experience and his sympathetic temperament enabled him to write with the sure hand of a trained artist.

His purpose is professedly moral: he insists on rewarding virtue, especially in *Pamela*, and in so doing comes perilously near creating an inane paragon of goodness. Indeed, the "rewarding" of Pamela with the hand of the erstwhile gay Mr. B[illegible], whom she brings to his senses after many trials and admonitions, smacks of "hire and salary." But what Richardson lacked in humor he made up in knowledge of the human heart and its intenser emotions. As a class his women are more real than his men and Clarissa is one of the great characters of English fiction. His books were immensely popular; they were translated into several languages; they were read and quoted everywhere. Here was a rediscovery of the human heart; here were the experiences of ordinary life in scenes which everyone recognized. What Defoe did for realistic adventure, for incident pure and simple, Richardson did for character and manners. The letter-form gave, as he thought, a greater naturalness to the events, while it facilitated the important matter of self-analysis. The domestic novel of sentiment is the significant contribution of Samuel Richardson to English literature.

HENRY FIELDING (1707-1754)

His Life.—Henry Fielding was born in Somersetshire in 1707, descendant of a noble family. He was educated at Eton, and studied law for a while at Leyden. Feeling no great interest in that profession, he went up to London in 1728 and began to write for the stage, turning out in rapid succession nearly thirty comedies, burlesques, and other light dramatic skits. He even tried the business of theatrical management for a time; married, and finally settled down to the duties of a Westminster justice of the peace, or police judge. This office he filled with great credit, his knowledge of law and his theatrical experiences standing him in good stead. Meanwhile Fielding had devoted his leisure hours to novel-writing. The occasion for

this was the appearance of Richardson's *Pamela*, which suggested to Fielding the idea of writing a parody on that much praised work. But as we shall presently see, what was begun in jest ended in earnest, and for the remaining twelve years Fielding gave himself seriously to the writing of fiction. His health had been failing for several years, and so serious was his condition by 1754 that he decided to spend the winter in a milder climate. Accordingly, he took ship for Lisbon. Weakened by the voyage and worn out with years of suffering, Fielding died not long after his arrival in Lisbon and was buried in the Protestant cemetery there.

His Works and Characteristics.—The works of Henry Fielding include a number of plays, several satires, and three immortal novels on which his reputation now chiefly rests—*Joseph Andrews* (1742), *Tom Jones* (1749), and *Amelia* (1751). *Joseph Andrews* was begun in ridicule of Richardson's *Pamela*, the sentimentality of which provoked the scornful laughter of Fielding. He set about writing a parody on that book: Joseph Andrews, the brother of Pamela Andrews, was to be exposed to the advances of the lady of the house in which he was employed, as his sister had suffered from those of the gay Mr. B——— in Richardson's novel; but in the end Joseph was also to have his "virtue rewarded." Fielding soon forgot his original intention, however, developed an exceedingly human and delightful plot, and created one of the great characters of English fiction, Parson Adams.

In his next novel, *Tom Jones*, Fielding produced a masterpiece. *Tom Jones* is the story of a healthy youth from childhood to manhood, whose native strength of character finally triumphs over occasional lamentable weaknesses of conduct. Though marred here and there by the coarseness of an outspoken and none too delicate age, this novel is eminently sane and vigorous and holds its own to-day among the supreme works of prose fiction in the world's literature. Fielding's last novel, *Amelia*, is the story of the patience and goodness of a wife whose thriftless husband, a captain in the British army, brought suffering to his family through his passion for gambling, as a result of which he spent much time in the debtors' prison. As the hero of *Tom Jones* was in part drawn from Fielding's own life, the heroine of

his third novel reflects the beautiful character of Fielding's wife, to whom he was devotedly attached.

In temperament and training Fielding was quite the opposite of Richardson. Possessing a keen sense of humor, full of boisterous animal spirits, descended from the landed gentry, classically and legally trained, and having an intimate knowledge of London life, Fielding brought to his work of novel-writing wide experience with human nature and extensive learning. He understood thoroughly "the animal called man," and he could depict him as he was. He divided his novels into books after the epic fashion, commented on the action in little introductory chapters in the manner of a classical chorus, and dealt with his characters in a way that suggests the comic dramatists of the preceding century. In his greatest novel, *Tom Jones*, character and incident, says Professor Cross, "are brought into equilibrium."[1] Where Richardson was sentimental, Fielding was humorous or satirical or matter-of-fact; where Richardson appealed to prudential motives, Fielding made it clear that virtue is its own reward in the peace of mind that follows, and that vice brings a troubled conscience to the evildoer. He does not apologize for his characters or gloss over their defects; they are, as in life, a compound of good and evil. He makes his novels end well, for he was too much of an optimist to do otherwise; he disliked sickly sentimentality, and in blatant professions of goodness he suspected a latent hypocrisy. He asserted more than once, indeed, that it is the duty of a novelist to unmask hypocrisy, to expose vice, and in general to paint men and women as they are.

Fielding is not the delicate psychologist that Richardson is: he cannot minutely examine and report in detail on the emotions. Tender he is when he touches on the real crises of life, for he had a warm and generous heart, and he had a sense of infinite pity for the sufferings of the innocent; but his preëminently masculine nature made him less successful in portraying women. Richardson's women are more convincing than his men; Fielding's

[1] Cross: *Development of the English Novel, p. 51.*

men are truer to life than his women. Richardson gave us the first realistic novel of sentiment, Fielding the first realistic novel of humor: both gave us the novel of manners, Richardson from the inside, Fielding more from the outside. As pictures of actual life Fielding's works impress us to-day as more modern and universal. Such characters as Tom Jones and Squire Western are as lifelike as actual people of our acquaintance.

Smollett and Sterne—Less significant in the development of the English novel than Richardson and Fielding, but noteworthy nevertheless as reflecting certain aspects of the new literary form, are Tobias Smollett and Lawrence Sterne. Tobias Smollett (1721–1771) was a Scotch surgeon who had spent several years on one of the ships of the British navy in quest of adventure before settling in London to practice his profession. Impressed by the success of *Pamela* and *Joseph Andrews*, Smollett tried his hand at fiction, and in 1748 published his first novel, *Roderick Random*. Two other works followed during the next four years, *Peregrine Pickle* and *Ferdinand Count Fathom*. Smollett's last and greatest novel, *Humphrey Clinker*, appeared in 1771, the year of his death. Smollett carried on in modified form the traditions of the picaresque, or rogue novel, frankly acknowledging his indebtedness to Le Sage's *Gil Blas*. The novels of Smollett are "strings of adventures," the material for which is partly drawn from his own varied experiences on sea and land, but the realism of the characters saves the stories from being simply novels of incident. Smollett is the first novelist to introduce real sailors, real ships, and the real atmosphere of the sea; he is, moreover, the first to make use of national types—Scotchmen, Irishmen, Welshmen, Jews, as well as Englishmen.

Laurence Sterne (1713–1768), son of an Irish army-officer, was educated at Cambridge, entered the Church, was made prebendary of York, preached, traveled, and wrote two books which are usually called novels. The first of these is *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy*, in several volumes which appeared from 1760 to 1767. This curious work purports to be the autobiography of Tristram Shandy, but the central personage

is the old soldier, "my Uncle Toby," too tenderhearted to hurt a fly, who is one of the most clearly drawn characters in fiction. The book is constructed on no definite plan: the writer rambles on with his pretended reminiscences, breaks off when he pleases and resumes when the mood strikes him, fills up chapters with asterisks, dashes, index-hands, suddenly ends a chapter in the middle of a sentence, or leaves blank a chapter which the reader's imagination may supply. What entitles it to be called a novel is the realism of the character of Uncle Toby and his surroundings rather than the plot, which Sterne was never able to bring to an end. At heart Sterne was a practical joker, and delighted to puzzle his readers with his whimsicalities. His other work, *A Sentimental Journey*, published the last year of his life, is an account of his travels in France and Italy and reveals the same oddities of mind and expression in his comment on persons and things. Throughout these two books striking proverbs occur: in *A Sentimental Journey* we find "God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," which has often been mistaken for a Biblical quotation. The novel of whimsical humor and sentiment is Sterne's contribution to our literature.

Minor Novelists.—The four writers just discussed—Richardson, Fielding, Smollett, and Sterne—are the founders of the English novel, and their influence is perceptible in the writings of the great standard novelists of the nineteenth century, such as Dickens and Thackeray. The contemporary imitators of Richardson and Fielding were of course numerous. Of their immediate followers the most original is FRANCES BURNEY (afterwards Madame D'Arblay), whose *Evelina* (1778)—a clever story in the letter-form based on her observations of social London—is the first important society novel in English literature, creating a sensation second only to that produced by *Clarissa Harlowe* years before. As a realistic picture of London society at that time *Evelina* is not only interesting reading to-day, but a valuable "human document" for the historian who would reconstruct the period. More striking as a work of genius is *The Vicar of Wakefield* of OLIVER GOLDSMITH which appeared in 1766, our first real domes-

tic novel, the influence of which upon the history of prose fiction has been very great. All these productions are essentially realistic, showing that the novel was the outgrowth of a quickened social sense and that the earliest novelists were students and portrayers of life at close range as they had observed it. So far we have found the domestic novel of sentiment, the realistic novel of humor, and the society novel. With the Romantic Revival, soon to be considered, there appeared several prose romances, such as Walpole's *Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Mrs. Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794), in which the weird and the unusual are given a realistic treatment. Reference will again be made to the romantic novel in the next chapter.

II. JOHNSON AND HIS CIRCLE

The most conspicuous figure of this period is Samuel Johnson, essayist, critic, biographer, talker. In an age of transition from Classicism, or literary conformity, to Romanticism, or poetic reaction against cold rules, Johnson stands for the literary traditions of the Age of Pope. Around him were gathered in the famous "literary club" men of such varied genius and vocation as Goldsmith, Burke, Gibbon, Reynolds, Garrick, and the indefatigable Boswell. This group of eminent men looked up to Johnson as literary dictator, and their attitude represented in general that of the English people, though the dawn of a new era in literature was already at hand, bringing with it changed ideals in regard to man and nature. Not since the merry meetings at the Mermaid Tavern in the days of Shakespeare when "rare Ben Jonson" was literary oracle—not even in the Restoration days when John Dryden expounded literary law and gospel at Will's Coffee-house—had there been such fine talk as that of Johnson and his circle as recorded by Boswell in his *Life of Johnson*. To several of the main figures in that group of men we must now give our attention.

SAMUEL JOHNSON (1709-1784)

His Life.—In the sleepy cathedral town of Lichfield Samuel Johnson was born in 1709, son of Michael Johnson, a bookseller. He was a sickly child.

SAMUEL JOHNSON

with a taint of scrofula and a tendency to melancholy, but along with this tendency he inherited from his father a powerful frame and great physical endurance. As a boy he read enormously: "Sir," said he to Boswell in later life, "in my early years I read very hard; it is a sad reflection but a true one, that I knew almost as much at eighteen as I do now." At the Lichfield school young Johnson was noted for his proficiency in Latin, acquiring a speaking knowledge of that language before he went to Oxford. He doubtless received the best part of his education in his father's bookshop, where there was a miscellaneous collection of standard literature, ancient and modern, some of which could not be found in the libraries of the English universities. In 1728 Johnson went to Oxford, matriculating at Pembroke College. He was miserably poor and he was proud; he had long fits of depression, which he strove to get rid of by what the Oxford tutors called "outbreaks against authority": these were in reality fights against the inner demon of melancholy. Naturally, therefore, his Oxford days were neither happy nor successful; he had, however, while there translated Pope's *Messiah* into Latin verse, and had read Law's *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, a work which made a lasting impression upon him.

you were to write a fable about little fishes," Goldsmith once said to the literary autocrat, "you would make the little fishes talk like whales." Johnson's colloquial style was direct and simple enough, but when he wrote, his language became formal and balanced. Though he wrote two respectable poems, Johnson is not a poet, but a prose writer in an age of prose; he is a belated classicist, the last of his tribe, at a time when the tide of reaction was setting in strong toward Romanticism.

Boswell's Life of Johnson.—*The Life of Samuel Johnson,* by James Boswell, is a voluminous record of the sayings and doings of the great man by a devoted disciple. It is one of the most fascinating books in the history of English literature, and has outlasted in popular interest all the formal utterances of Johnson. Here we have a familiar picture, worked out in great detail and in utmost frankness, of the daily life of the hero—his talk at the club, his opinions on all manner of subjects, his rebukes of Boswell, Boswell's flunkeyism (as Carlyle calls it), his eternal notebook, and his unflagging idolatry. The result is a chatty, companionable book which one may take up at odd moments, dip into, and put down at will, certain to carry away a witty saying, a moral maxim, a wise comment on men and books, a valuable bit of advice, many grains of sound common sense. It is a loving transcript of a varied and rich personality, with which every young person should make a first-hand acquaintance. Whether the student reads much of Johnson's own writings or not, he should not fail to read Boswell's *Life of Johnson.*

OLIVER GOLDSMITH (1728-1774)

His Life.—Oliver Goldsmith was born in the village of Pallas, Ireland, in 1728. When he was two years old, his father, a vicar with a large family, moved to Lissoy, afterwards celebrated as the "sweet Auburn" of *The Deserted Village.* After some local schooling during which he had the reputation of being a dull pupil, young Goldsmith, by the advice of his "Uncle Contarine," was sent in 1745 to Trinity College, University of Dublin. His college career was marked by various irregularities, poverty, and a fair degree of devotion to the classics. He received his B. A. degree in 1749. The next two years he spent at home, ostensibly preparing to enter the

Church; but, so the story goes, the bishop declined to ordain him because he appeared before him in bright scarlet breeches. Goldsmith then decided to study law in London, his good Uncle Contarine having given him money for this purpose. He gambled or gave away the money with his usual thriftlessness, and returned home. Again his uncle came to the rescue and furnished him means to study medicine at Edinburgh. Here he remained two years, writing and singing Irish songs and telling funny stories to the great delight of his companions, and incidentally studying a little medicine. In 1754 he decided to go to the continent to complete his medical education.

The next two years he spent in Leyden, Paris, and possibly at Padua, attending lectures and wandering over parts of Holland, France, Italy, and Germany. Little is known of his life on the continent except what he has told, to the effect that he walked over southern France and through northern Italy playing his flute and engaging in "disputations" with scholars at Italian universities, where he, as successful disputant, would often get a dinner and a night's lodging as a reward for his learning. Goldsmith returned to London in 1756.

Goldsmith's literary career began in 1757 as a contributor to *The Monthly Review* and general hack-writer for various publishers. His first important piece of writing, *An Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning in Europe*, came out in 1759, and attracted favorable comment. In 1761 Goldsmith met Johnson and was soon to be one of that circle of illustrious men who in 1764 organized the Literary Club. Johnson's friendship was invaluable to Goldsmith, for the great man introduced him to many influential persons and came to his relief from time to time when the impecunious poet and essayist was in dire straits. That very year of 1764 Johnson did him a memorable turn: Goldsmith was in trouble with his landlady because he was unable to pay his rent; hearing of it, Johnson sent his friend a guinea, which the thirsty author immediately spent in wine. When Johnson arrived he found Goldsmith entertaining the landlady. In reply to the Doctor's inquiries as to whether he had anything ready for the press, Goldsmith mentioned a novel he had finished; Johnson at once recognized its merit and hastened to a publisher who gave him sixty pounds for the manuscript. This was *The Vicar of Wakefield*, which, when published two years later, greatly increased Goldsmith's reputation.

The last ten years of his life were spent in the writing of a variety of works, from history to drama. Goldsmith died in 1774 in his forty-seventh year at his lodgings in the Court of the Middle Temple and was buried just outside the Temple Church, a little off Fleet Street, a thoroughfare forever associated with him and his learned friend, Dr. Johnson. The day he died hundreds of the poor of London, with whom he had shared his meager income, crowded up the stairs to his lodging weeping. Sir Joshua Reynolds,

the great painter, was so deeply affected that he threw aside his pencil for that day, a very unusual tribute from a man who boasted of passing "no day without a line." A monument to Goldsmith's memory, for which Johnson composed the inscription in Latin, was a little later put up by the Literary Club in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

His Personality.—Homely of face and awkward in manner, Oliver Goldsmith won his way to the affections of men by his genial good nature, his sympathies, his humor and pathos, and his human frailties. There was much of the typical Bohemian about him: picturesque and careless in dress, utterly improvident, droll in speech and action, generous in spirit, he is, as Thackeray says, "the most beloved of English writers." He was an Irishman, and throughout his life he showed the versatility and the sentiment of the Celtic nature—"always ready to react against the despotism of fact," to quote Matthew Arnold's apt phrase. Chronically in debt—at his death he owed two thousand pounds—Goldsmith somehow managed to get people to trust him. Blundering in speech and sometimes saying foolish things, especially when he tried to shine at the Club by arguing with Dr. Johnson, he also said some very clever things; as, for instance, this in regard to Boswell: "He is only a burr; Tom Davies flung him at Johnson in sport, and he has the faculty of sticking." It was Garrick who said of Goldsmith that he

> Wrote like an angel and talked like Poor Pol.

That is a more epigrammatic than truthful statement, however, for when unembarrassed he could hold his own with the best of them. To know Goldsmith the man one must read his poetry and prose, for in them his lovable personality is reflected to an unusual degree.

His Works and Style.—Goldsmith was poet, essayist, novelist, and dramatist. He also compiled several histories, but they do not count except for their pleasant style. His principal works are: *The Traveler* (1764) and *The Deserted Village* (1770), his two long poems; *The Citizen of the World* (1762), a series of essays in

the form of letters from a fictitious Chinese official visiting London, the best known of which is the inimitable portrait of Beau Tibbs; *The Vicar of Wakefield* (1766), the first genuine domestic novel; and two comedies, *The Good-natured Man* (1768) and *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773).

Goldsmith's two long poems are among the most popular descriptive poetry in our language, his pictures of places and persons being as clear-cut as Chaucer's and even more charming. They are based on his own experiences and observations, reflecting his travels and his boyhood memories. *The Deserted Village*, in particular, brings vividly before us home scenes which are suggestive in outline at least of the surroundings of many a country-bred youth of the older time—the village parson and the schoolmaster, the summer evenings, the games, the simple joys of the countryside. These poems are written in rhyming couplets, but so varied are the pauses and so natural the diction that they cannot be classified with the artificial verse of the "school of Pope." The truth is, Goldsmith's poetry is partly romantic in tone, reflecting that love of country and nature which, as we shall presently see, is so marked a characteristic of the newer verse. The village preacher is, of course, reminiscent of Goldsmith's own father—"passing rich on forty pounds a year," and as delightfully indifferent to conventionalities and money-making as was his distinguished son. The Reverend Doctor Primrose, in *The Vicar of Wakefield*, is again the elder Goldsmith, guileless and gullible, making the best of bad bargains. *The Vicar of Wakefield* marks an epoch in the history of the novel—the transition from domestic adventure of a somewhat coarser or over-sentimental sort to refined, quiet family life in the country.

She Stoops to Conquer, Goldsmith's best comedy, is based on a boyhood exploit—a night spent by young Oliver in a private house to which he had been directed by a practical joker who assured him it was an inn. From this suggestion of a plot Goldsmith developed the laughable situations and incidents in *She Stoops to Conquer; or the Mistakes of a Night*. This play has never lost its popularity, and is as amusing on the stage to-day as it was

the first time it was presented. In these delightful comedies Goldsmith made a distinct contribution to the English drama, causing a reaction against the silly sentimental drama, which had really lost interest for people of taste, by introducing a sane and wholesome kind of social comedy. It remained for Richard Brinsley Sheridan, Goldsmith's young contemporary, to perfect this species of comedy in his brilliant society plays, *The Rivals* and the *School for Scandal.*

Versatility of genius and charm of style—these are the evident characteristics of Goldsmith the writer. "He touched almost every kind of writing, and he touched nothing that he did not adorn," is Dr. Johnson's just appraisal of his worth in the famous inscription. Wholesome in the choice of his subjects, he is equally wholesome in the treatment of them. Purity of diction goes along with ease and grace of style. His humor is gentle but infectious, and in his comedies it bursts into laughter; his pathos touches the springs of tears, causes sympathy and then pity, that child of sympathy. In his humor there is "malice toward none and charity for all." The humanity of Goldsmith pervades all he wrote with an indefinable charm, and his writings, particularly his essays, are a model of easy and elegant style.

EDMUND BURKE (1729-1797)

His Life.—Edmund Burke, a fellow-member of Goldsmith's in the Literary Club and a warm friend of his and Johnson's, was born in Dublin in 1729. After graduating at Trinity College, Dublin, young Burke, whose father was an attorney, studied law in London. He had a growing love for literature, and during these years he read widely outside of the law, spent much time in quiet rural retreats, and did some writing on literary and philosophical subjects. In this way he laid the foundation of that immense knowledge of books and men which distinguished his political career. So indifferent, indeed, did he seem toward purely legal studies and mere political preferment at this time that his father, disappointed and angered, withdrew his allowance, and Burke found himself in sore financial straits. Forced to rely upon his pen for a living, he published in 1756 his treatise on *The Sublime and the Beautiful,* begun before he was of age. This was followed by other essays, more or less heavy and imitative. Pleased at the favorable reception of these writings by the public, his father relented so far as to send him money.

In 1765 Burke became private secretary to Lord Rockingham, head of the new Whig ministry, and with this appointment his political career really began. Not long after this he was elected to Parliament, and was, with varying fortunes, a member of that body until within a few years of his death. Meanwhile he had purchased an estate at Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire, where with his family he spent much time each year. In 1764 he joined the Literary Club, in which he became a leading spirit, being honored by his colleagues, whether Whig or Tory, for his great intellectual gifts, his power in debate, and his amiability of manner. Burke was one of the few members of the Club who dared to argue with Dr. Johnson; and though the latter called him "a cursed Whig," he nevertheless greatly admired Burke's mental powers and along with the rest sincerely loved the man. Burke's fame as an orator was established by his speeches in the Parliamentary debates on taxation of the American colonies, and reached its climax in the impeachment trial of Warren Hastings in 1787, so graphically described by Macaulay. His active service as a statesman came to an end in 1794, and three years later he died at his Beaconsfield estate and was buried there.

His Works and Characteristics.—Burke's two earlier works, *A Vindication of Natural Society* and *A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*, are essays in the somewhat labored, classical style of the day. Out of a number of other works—speeches and political essays—two in particular rank among our greatest prose classics, the *Speech on Conciliation with America* (1775) and *Reflections on the French Revolution* (1790). The first of these because of its interest to Americans and its admirable literary qualities has long been a familiar classic in the schools. In this famous speech Burke's fundamental proposition is that the American colonies can be held only by granting to them the opportunity of taxing themselves rather than by imposing taxes upon them. He believed that taxation without representation is unjust, that representation, owing to their distance from the mother country, was impossible, and that coercion was inexpedient. The only solution, therefore, lay in conciliation; he trusted the result to the loyalty of a kindred people. The right of taxation he does not discuss, but bases his argument on expediency alone: the truest wisdom, he asserts, lies in magnanimity toward the American colonies. This is the

gist of the speech, elaborated with an array of details and a force of argument truly wonderful. As we know, Burke's advice was not heeded, and the freedom of the colonies soon followed.

In the *Reflections on the French Revolution* Burke, disgusted and horrified at the excesses of that reign of blood and missing the real significance of the movement, is the defender of the established order. Certain passages in this impassioned essay—notably the one on Marie Antoinette, whom Burke had seen in her fresh young beauty—are among the most poetic in the whole range of our prose literature.

The truth is, Burke was at heart a poet. It would not be far wrong to call him a poetic political philosopher. He had a passion, as some one has said, for order and a passion for justice; he had, moreover, an immense fund of knowledge. This passion for order and justice and this great knowledge he lighted up with a splendid imagination, which clothed itself at times in almost oriental richness of imagery. Metaphor follows metaphor and the stately periods move on in gorgeous procession to the climax. His speeches were often on too high a plane for his audiences and consequently failed in immediate effect; he saw too far ahead, cared too little for temporary success or personal preferment, to be understood by the practical politicians. Hence his principal schemes, though ultimately justifying his wisdom, failed of adoption at the moment, and Burke usually found himself in what men of larger foresight have come to call the "saving minority."

Throughout his speeches occur sentences so fundamentally true that they stick in our memory as wise political maxims: "Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom, and a great empire and little minds go ill together;" "Whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is in my opinion safe." Burke's writing is saturated with thought, as Matthew Arnold said; and his knowledge and his imagination were as great as his thought. Dr. Johnson's comment was, as usual, apt: "Burke does not talk from a desire for distinction, but because his mind is full." His three hours' speech on *Conciliation with the American Colonies* (which every young person ought

carefully to analyze as a model of structure) and his nine-hours' impeachment speech at the trial of Warren Hastings would alone entitle him to be called one of the world's great orators. Three great occasions afforded Burke an opportunity for impressive utterance: the crisis between England and her American colonies, the administration of India, and the French Revolution. Seldom, indeed, do three such political crises occur within the lifetime of one man; seldom does a nation have so great an orator, thinker, and philosopher as Burke to discuss them. Throughout his life he was true to his ideals, and his writings are therefore as much a literary heritage as they are rich in political wisdom.

Other Prose Writers of the Period.—In this age of high excellence in prose there are many writers whom the limited scope of this work will not permit us to consider—historians, philosophers, letter-writers, orators. There was, moreover, a good deal of dramatic writing, but it had little genuine literary quality, being, as a rule, commonplace in theme and in expression. Since the Restoration plays of the later seventeenth century, the drama had degenerated, after the moral reaction against the licentious but brilliant Congrevian Comedy of Manners, into a species of sentimental domestic comedy or into the light social farce, clever enough, but without lasting merit. In the present period the wholesome and bright comedies of Goldsmith, already mentioned, and Sheridan's two plays, *The Rivals* and *The School for Scandal*, are memorable. David Garrick was the great actor, but he was not a creative genius. This is, indeed, an age of clever actors and mediocre dramatists. Among the orators, besides Burke, there were Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan, men whose immediate appeal was greater than Burke's but whose place in literature is far below his. Among the letter-writers the most interesting are Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, Lord Chesterfield, and Horace Walpole. The great historians are Gibbon, Hume, and Robertson. Of these Gibbon is the most distinctively literary, and demands a brief consideration.

Edward Gibbon (1737-1794).—Born at Putney, educated at Westminster School, London, and at Madgalen College, Oxford,

where he says he passed his time unprofitably, Edward Gibbon spent much of his life on one great work—*The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.* The conception came to him in 1764 when on a visit to Rome:

> It was at Rome on the fifteenth of October, 1764, as I sat musing among the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefooted friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind.

This mighty work in six volumes was not finished until twenty-three years later at Lausanne in Switzerland; in this memorable passage, which will serve as an example of Gibbon's lofty style, he tells of the scene and describes his emotions as he finished the task:

> It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June, 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve that I wrote the last line of the last page in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not describe the first emotions of joy on the recovery of my freedom, and perhaps the establishment of my fame; but my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind by the idea that I had taken my everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future fate of my history, the life of the historian must be short and precarious.

The scope of this great work is nearly fourteen centuries—from the beginning of the reign of Trojan in 98 A. D. to the fall of Constantinople in 1453. Gibbon's immense learning, his ability to bring buried centuries before the mind in a series of wonderfully vivid pictures, and his freedom from partisanship—the modern historical sense—make him one of the world's supreme historians. The one serious defect of the history lies in the failure of Gibbon to give sufficient credit to Christianity as a potent factor in mediaeval civilization. His style is always sustained: the periods are long and rolling, the diction sonorous, so that in

reading it aloud one is reminded of the measured tones of the classically trained old-fashioned orator. The *Memoirs* of Gibbon are among the most interesting biographical contributions in our literature.

III. BEGINNINGS OF ROMANTICISM

What is Romanticism?—We have seen that much of the eighteenth century was dominated by Classicism, or conformity to cold, regular, and "correct" rules—the movement which began mainly through French influence in the Restoration Period and which found in Dryden, Pope, and Johnson its most notable representatives. In the latter part of the eighteenth century a reaction against Classicism is clearly manifest, and this new movement is known as Romanticism. Indeed, even in the days of Pope, in the heyday of the Augustans, there were signs here and there of this reaction, but they were exceptional. In general Romanticism means a renewal of interest in the emotional and imaginative nature of man, a reassertion of the deeper poetic instincts, a restoration of feeling to its proper place in literature, which had been so long cramped by artificial rules. Romanticism means the return of enthusiasm and the outburst of new poetic fire; we shall presently see the new poetry at its best in the Romantic group composed of Wordsworth, Scott, Shelley, Byron, Keats, Coleridge. Now we have to do with the pioneer poets of Romanticism—Thomson, Gray, Blake, Cowper, Collins, Chatterton, Burns. We shall better undertsand the work of these pioneers in the new movement and be prepared to interpret their successors, the genuine romantic poets, if we fix clearly in our minds several well-defined characteristics of the new poetry.

1. *A delight in the quiet charm of country sights and sounds as opposed to the older absorption in the artificial life of the "town."* This reflection of rural nature in the poetry is the way in which Romanticism begins to manifest itself. It is in reality a rediscovery of nature, so long forgotten amid the trivialities of city

life. Delight in the serener aspects of nature gradually passed into a rapt admiration for the wilder scenery of mountain and sea.

2. *A revival of interest in the mystery, romance, and picturesqueness of the Middle Ages.* The name "romantic" is derived from this characteristic, for the Middle Ages furnished an immense number of stories, ballads, epics, called in general "romances," the word referring originally to metrical stories based on legends found in Latin or in one of the romance languages. Out of this interest in mediaeval literature grew much of the weird, ghostly, and grotesque element in certain of our romantic poets and prose writers. Along with the romance contribution proper there is considerable obligation to oriental and Celtic sources.

3. *Sympathy for the lowly and the oppressed, and in consequence a higher regard for the rights of the individual.* This is the humanitarian aspect of Romanticism that connects it with the French Revolution. The worth and dignity of man find expression in Burns and Wordsworth; childhood at last gets a place in poetry, notably in Blake; and the lower animals are made subjects of poetic sentiment, as in Blake and Burns and Cowper. The cottage and the humble peasant receive sympathetic treatment. There is a greater liberalism of thought, which shakes or overthrows old social and political systems.

4. *A return to the Elizabethans for materials and methods in poetry.* Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton are read afresh, with the result that considerable imitation, conscious and unconscious, of the older poets is to be found among the romanticists. Spenser in particular comes into favor again; there is a fondness for archaic words; the old English ballads are collected and eagerly read. Quite as important as the influence of the Elizabethan revival on the subject matter and style of poetry is the influence on the form of the verse. The heroic couplet had held undisputed sway since the days of Dryden, but now old meters began to reappear—the Spenserian stanza, blank verse, the ballad stanza, the sonnet, and many lyric measures.

These four leading characteristics of the romantic movement may be more briefly summarized as the *Return to Nature, Interest*

in the Middle Ages, Sympathy with Man (out of which childhood and the home find a prominent place in literature), and the *Reversion to the Spirit of the Elizabethans.* In general, the *supremacy of common sense* yields to the *supremacy of the imagination.* We are now ready to trace the new movement from its faint beginnings in the mid-eighteenth century to its splendid climax in poetry and prose fiction in the first quarter of the nineteenth. The stream of romantic poetry was never really interrupted in Scotland; it was in England that Classicism had for a century chilled the genial current of song. From a group of Scotch poets—Thomson, Beattie, Blair, and Ramsay—the romantic movement receives its earliest impulse in England, while the continuity of the northern imagination is virtually unbroken from the ballad writers to the "Wizard of the North," Sir Walter Scott.

The Scotch Poets.—JAMES THOMSON (1700-1748) was born in the lowlands of Scotland, educated at the University of Edinburgh, went to London in 1725, and spent the rest of his life in and near the metropolis. He was a disciple of Pope, but his best poetry shows an appreciation of rural nature which makes him a pioneer of the romantic movement. *The Seasons* (1730), his longest poem, written in blank verse and full of nature-description, is usually regarded as the first to reflect the newer spirit in poetry. More romantic still is *The Castle of Indolence* (1748), written in the Spenserian stanza, abounding in archaic words, and enchantingly languorous in tone. In form and spirit it is distinctly imitative of Spenser.

JAMES BEATTIE (1735-1803), a Scotch schoolmaster of Aberdeen, wrote one famous poem, *The Minstrel*, on the progress of the poet's mind and imagination. It is really an autobiography, and has been called an "humble ancestor of Wordsworth's *Prelude.*" The verse is melodious and shows sensitiveness to the varied aspects of nature. He uses the Spenserian stanza and, like Thomson, imitates "the poets' poet."

ROBERT BLAIR (1699-1746), a Scotch clergyman, wrote a poem in blank verse, *The Grave* (1743), which for dramatic vigor of expression and vividness of detail—to say nothing of the "church-

yard atmosphere"—is suggestive of the later Elizabethans and distinctly "romantic."

ALLAN RAMSAY (1686-1758), an Edinburgh bookseller of genial temperament, is the editor and author of a number of volumes of Scottish verse, but his reputation as a poet rests to-day chiefly on *The Gentle Shepherd,* a pastoral poem full of pleasing rustic scenes depicted in harmonious language. He is one of the best-beloved of Scotch poets, honored with a monument by his own city and affectionately spoken of as the "gentle shepherd."

Another singer of Scotland, noted for his lyric gift and as a precursor of Burns, is ROBERT FERGUSSON (1750-1774) to whom the greater poet more than once pays tribute by using his cruder songs as models for his own more exquisite lyrics.

William Collins (1721–1759).—Born at Chichester, in southern England, educated at Winchester and Oxford, William Collins early showed a genius for writing delicately sensitive lyric verse. Disappointed at the indifference shown his little volumes of *Odes,* published in 1746, Collins gradually lapsed into a melancholy which deepened into hopeless insanity. He left several odes which are among the most artistic and flute-like in all literature. The "Ode to the Passions," "Ode to Evening," "Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands," his pathetic ode to Thomson, of whom he was a disciple—"In yonder Grave a Druid Lies," —his exquisite "Song from Shakespeare's Cymbeline," and the little ode beginning—

> How sleep the brave who sink to rest
> By all their country's wishes blest—

are pastoral lyrics of very high order, and have distinguished Collins as the most musical of the pioneers of Romanticism. A French critic thinks that since Ariel's song in the *Tempest,* "Full fathom five," "nothing had appeared comparable in its kind to the elfin music of this stanza written early in 1746:"[1]

[1] Seccombe's *The Age of Johnson,* p. 248.

By fairy hands their knell is rung;
By forms unseen their dirge is sung;
There honour comes, a pilgrim grey,
To deck the turf that wraps their clay;
And freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell, a weeping hermit, there!

Thomas Chatterton (1752–1770).—Thomas Chatterton, the "marvelous boy" whose tragic fate has given a pathetic interest to his excellent verse, was the son of a Bristol schoolmaster. From early childhood he took delight in old folios and antiquities, spending much time in a neighboring church reading the ancient charters deposited there. He read widely in the chronicles of Holinshed and Geoffrey of Monmouth and was fond of Chaucer and Spenser. From these he acquired a vocabulary of obsolete words and a quaintness of diction which he employed in certain poems, mostly in the old ballad-measure, given out by him as having been written by a fifteenth-century monk named Thomas Rowley whose parchments he had discovered in an old chest. Even so clever a man as Horace Walpole, to whom Chatterton sent several of the "Rowley parchments," was deceived for a while. Chatterton, who had been apprenticed to an attorney for several years without showing any real interest in law, now set out for London to begin in earnest his literary career. At first he was successful; then the magazines declined to accept several poems which are now highly regarded; the youthful poet, without money and without friends, became depressed at his waning success. On the verge of actual starvation and too proud to beg, Chatterton tore into small fragments a large amount of manuscript one night in his wretched Holborn Street garret and poisoned himself. He was not quite eighteen years old.

This high-strung, solitary boy, with his passionate love of antique song and his morbid tendency to gloomy fancies, is a typical pioneer romanticist, embodying the unrest, the mystery, the strangeness of that awakened interest in the Middle Ages which a little later appeared more sanely and more beautifully in Keats and Coleridge. He felt that he would not get a hearing

unless he gave to his poetry a mediaeval flavor, and so he claimed to be a discoverer of old manuscripts. His ballads lack the simplicity of the old; they are romantic ballads, precursors of "Christabel" and the "Ancient Mariner." The best poems of Chatterton are the "Bristowe Tragedie," "An Excelente Balade of Charitie," "Song to Aella." The small volume of his verse has been read with an increasing sense of his worth as a poet mingled with regret and pity at his brief, pathetic life.

Macpherson and the "Poems of Ossian" (1736–1796).—Another curious literary forgery about this time was a series of poetic fragments which James Macpherson, a Highland schoolmaster, claimed to have translated from Ossian, the traditional Gaelic poet. These were so favorably received that Macpherson published during the next three years two epics, *Fingal* (1762) and *Temora* (1763). An Ossian craze followed: Macpherson was acclaimed a literary discoverer, given a pension, and honored by critics at home and abroad, with one notable exception—Dr. Samuel Johnson. The sturdy old classicist bluntly charged Macpherson with forgery and demanded the original manuscripts. A war of words followed, but the manuscripts were not forthcoming. Macpherson threatened Johnson with personal violence, and that is the time the old gentleman walked the London streets with a stout oak staff; the enemy, however, was not visible. It is pretty generally agreed that Macpherson's *Ossian* is at least based on fragments of old Celtic legends, but most of the elaborate highly-colored prose known as the *Poems of Ossian* is the work of James Macpherson. To us it seems extremely monotonous with its weird and lurid imagery and its general vagueness, though there is a kind of wild beauty about it. Macpherson caught the spirit of the Celtic bards with wonderful effect, and *Ossian,* imitation though it was, became widely popular and had a marked influence on the romantic movement.

Percy and the Ballads (1729–1811).—Bishop Thomas Percy, of Dromore, Ireland, published in 1765 a collection of folk songs and ballads in three volumes which he called *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry,* the first attempt at bringing together the most

popular of the old Scottish and English ballads. Larger and more scholarly collections now exist—notably that of Professor Child, of Harvard,—but Percy's book, which contains such famous ballads as "Chevy Chace," the "Nut Brown Mayde," "Battle of Otterburn," "Sir Patrick Spens," and others, long ago became a classic in our literature. Perhaps no other one book had such an influence in bringing about the romantic revival as Percy's *Reliques*. Sir Walter Scott, in particular, is strongly indebted to it. "The first time I could scrape a few shillings together," says he, "I bought myself a copy of these beloved volumes; nor do I believe I ever read a book half so frequently or with half the enthusiasm."

THOMAS GRAY (1716-1771)

His Life.—Thomas Gray, the author of the "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," the best known poem in our literature, was born in London in 1716; his father, like Milton's, was a scrivener. Gray's education was very largely directed by his mother, to whom he was deeply attached. After leaving Eton, he went to Peterhouse, the oldest of the colleges of Cambridge University. At Cambridge Gray was a devoted student of the classics, noted for his fastidious tastes and retiring disposition. Soon after taking his degree he went with Horace Walpole, whom he had met at Eton, on a walking tour through France and Italy, particularly through the mountains, the wild scenery of the Alps strongly appealing to Gray. Returning to Cambridge after three years, Gray settled down as a fellow, and absorbed in the study of the classics, science, and antiquities, spent the rest of his life at the University. He varied the monotony of the scholar's existence with occasional visits to friends, to the British Museum, and to Stoke Pogis, the home of his mother and sister. Three years before his death he was appointed Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, but did not lecture.

An anecdote of Gray's life at Cambridge is still told there as illustrating his sensitive and shy nature and accounting for his removal from Peterhouse to Pembroke College where he died. Gray, it seems, was very much afraid of fire, and had provided a projecting iron railing in front of his third story window to which he might attach a rope and descend. Some young men on the same floor raised an alarm of fire one night. The poet (he was a well-known man of letters at the time) hastily attached his rope ladder and descended; not, however, to the ground, but into a water barrel which his mischievous associates had prepared for quenching him—a not very

ment are essentially romantic. The odes of Gray are called "Pindaric Odes," because they are in the form employed by the Greek poet Pindar. This difficult poetic form Gray used with noteworthy success. "The Bard" is a spirited poem; from the first impassioned lines—

> Ruin seize thee, ruthless King!
> Confusion on thy banners wait,
> Tho' fann'd by Conquest's crimson wing,
> They mock the air with idle state—

to the very last, the indignation of the prophetic bard, denouncing the conqueror, fiercely burns.

Gray, like Goldsmith, was too much under the domination of the classic spell to abandon rhyme for blank verse, and so he belongs in part to the old order, but not so much as Goldsmith, who clung to the heroic couplet modified. Gray, pioneer romanticist though he is in his return to nature and his delight in Welsh and Norse themes, would doubtless have voiced the new movement more distinctly if he had fearlessly let himself go,—if, as Matthew Arnold suggests, he had "spoken out."

WILLIAM COWPER (1731-1800)

His Life.—Akin to Gray in shyness and melancholy and attached to the romantic movement on its nature and humanitarian sides, William Cowper is a more significant figure in our literature than his older contemporary. Cowper was born in Hertfordshire in 1731, the son of a clergyman. His mother died when he was six years old, and his sensitive nature was thus early exposed to the coldness or disdain of his little world. Bullied beyond endurance by a big schoolfellow in the local school, Cowper was sent to Westminster School, London, where he remained for some years, leaving it with a confirmed horror of the brutality of public school manners which he later expressed in one of his poems. It was decided that he should study law and he was accordingly put to reading in an attorney's office; but law was not to his taste, though he was actually admitted to practice in 1754. The next few years he wrote light essays for the magazines, went into society, and fell in love with a pretty cousin whom, but for her father's opposition, he would have married. An appointment as clerk of the journals of the House of Lords was now secured for Cowper, but he so greatly dreaded the simple ordeal of qualifying that he tried to commit suicide. This was

the first of those attacks of morbid depression which occurred at intervals throughout his life. Apparently cured by eighteen-months of confinement in a madhouse, he went to Huntingdon for greater quiet and recreation. His temporary insanity had left him with a profound religious melancholy.

At Huntingdon he met a clergyman named Unwin. Mr. and Mrs. Unwin took so much interest in Cowper and he was so delighted with their beautiful home life and religious spirit that he became as a member of the family and was the rest of his life associated with the Unwins. "Mrs. Unwin has almost a maternal affection for me, and I have something very like a filial one for her, and her son and I are brothers," wrote Cowper in one of his delightful letters describing the daily life of that happy family. At Olney, whither Mrs. Unwin had moved after her husband's death, Cowper wrote the famous *Olney Hymns*, and here he composed some of his best poetry. Lady Austen, an accomplished and vivacious friend of the family, related to the poet the legend of John Gilpin, from which the humorous ballad sprang. Peals of laughter were heard in Cowper's room that night, and the poet explained next morning that he had been writing some verses. He then proceeded to read "John Gilpin" at the breakfast table. When he asked Lady Austen one day for a subject on which he might write a long blank-verse poem, she replied, looking down at the sofa on which they were sitting, "Take the sofa." This was the occasion of *The Task*, his longest work, beginning, "I sing the Sofa."

In such pleasant companionship and amid peaceful country scenes Cowper spent his life. Fits of depression seized him from time to time, deepening into a mild form of insanity as the years wore on. At last darkness closed in upon his sensitive, morbid soul, lighted up now and then by fitful gleams of sanity, during which he struck off some exquisite poem; then deeper darkness, and then the end. He died the last year of the eighteenth century, when the old order had already fully yielded to the new.

His Work and Characteristics.—Cowper wrote a large amount of poetry on a variety of subjects and in varied forms. His first volume, published in 1782, contains such long poems as "Table Talk" and "Conversation," more or less in the conventional classic manner, though the rhyming couplets are less artificial than the old regulation verse, revealing now and then a genial humor. Cowper's first elaborate poem, a masterpiece of prolonged description, *The Task*, appeared in 1785 and made him famous. It is in blank verse, contains many striking passages of personal and nature description, quotable lines, and in general impresses one by its naturalness. From a mock-heroic discussion of the gradual

development of rude seats into the highly civilized sofa (the theme suggested as a "task" by Lady Austen) the poet passes to descriptions of country scenes, which for simplicity and charm remind us of passages in Wordsworth. The oft-quoted line—

> God made the country, and man made the town—

occurs in this poem.

"The Diverting History of John Gilpin" (1782) is Cowper's most humorous production, a favorite with young and old, the one poem in which the usually serious poet let himself go. Every reader of it wishes that he had done so many times. Cowper's tenderest utterance, and one of the greatest tributes in literature to maternal love, is the poem, "On the Receipt of my Mother's Picture," which came straight from the heart of a man of delicate sensibility whose mother died when he was a little child. "The Castaway" was written a year before Cowper's death, and in the fate of the lost sailor the poet forecasts his own:

> No voice divine the storm allayed,
> No light propitious shone,
> When, snatched from all effectual aid,
> We perished, each alone:
> But I beneath a rougher sea,
> And whelmed in deeper gulfs than he.

Besides these poems, descriptive and narrative, Cowper wrote some of the great hymns of our language: "Oh, for a closer walk with God," "God moves in a mysterious way," "There is a fountain filled with blood," "Hark, my Soul! it is the Lord." Furthermore he translated the *Iliad* into blank verse, a faithful and poetically meritorious version though never widely popular, possibly because his generation had been brought up on Pope's jingling translation. Finally, Cowper's *Letters* form a valuable and charming record of his domestic life. His leisure, his congenial surroundings, his fondness for the society of sympathetic women, and his playful humor, all contributed to make him the most delightful

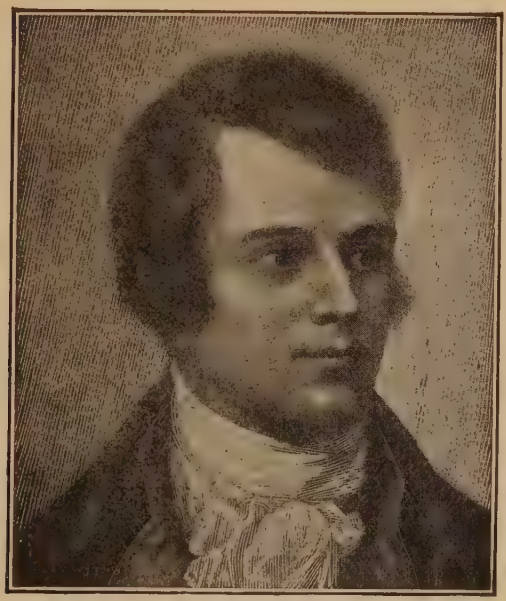
of eighteenth century letter-writers; and those who would know Cowper intimately should read the *Letters*.

Cowper belongs to the new school of nature poets, whose chief glory in the next century is William Wordsworth; his simple naturalness allies him with Wordsworth; the deep meditative sense and the mystic feeling for nature of his great successor he had not. What are the distinguishing romantic characteristics of Cowper's poetry? First of all, his delight in quiet rural nature; second, his social and political liberalism—opposition to oppression of every kind, slavery, war, injustice; third, a democratic spirit, which makes him a close kinsman of his own northern contemporary, Robert Burns.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796)

His Life.—The national poet of Scotland and the most widely read and loved of song makers, Robert Burns, whom we familiarly call "Bobbie," was born in a little clay cottage at Alloway, two miles from the city of Ayr, in 1759. His father, who built the cottage, was William Burns, a devout farmer, to whose piety and sterling character his famous son paid tribute in "The Cotter's Saturday Night." The boy had two and a half years of schooling, and at fifteen he became the chief helper of his father on the farm. During these years the elder Burns moved about from farm to farm, barely making a living, though he was an industrious and upright man. Meanwhile, Robert read and studied at home and at the plow, encouraged thereto by his father who was not without general culture. The father died in 1784, and Robert with his brother Gilbert took charge of a farm at Mossgiel in the hope of making an adequate support for the family. Here was written some of his best verse. Farming at Mossgiel was not a success and Burns, discouraged and restless, thought of going to Jamaica, when, acting on the advice of friends, he collected and published (1786) the first edition of his poems. The volume was cordially, even enthusiastically, received and an invitation to visit Edinburgh followed.

The visit to Edinburgh in the early part of the next year marks the crisis of Burns's life. In that city of social and literary culture he was received with flattering attention, wined and dined as the hero of the hour, and wondered at for his brilliant gift of conversation and his charm of manner. The peasant poet bore himself well in that critical circle, making friends and winning golden opinions. A second edition of his poems, with additions, was issued this same year, 1787, and because of his well-established reputation sold rapidly, bringing the author five hundred pounds, a big sum for



ROBERT BURNS

the needy poet. Burns returned to Mossgiel, but the poor prospect there and the discontent with his provincial lot which had naturally followed his splendid ovation among the great, led him to look for more lucrative and more congenial employment. He traveled about Scotland a while, visited Edinburgh again, where his reception was less hearty than before, and then settled on a farm near Ellisland, six miles from Dumfries. He had meanwhile married Jean Armour.

Though somewhat embittered by disappointment and weakened morally and physically by the several forms of dissipation from which he was never very long free, Burns nevertheless did some excellent poetic work at Ellisland—notably "Tam O'Shanter"—and might possibly have settled down to a steadier life had not his friends, through a mistaken kindness, secured his appointment as gauger and exciseman for the district. This office kept him much on the road and seriously tried his convivial nature. The farm was neglected, and finally in 1791 Burns moved with his family to Dumfries, from which he thought he might more satisfactorily carry on the gaugership. The years of intemperance were telling on his powerful frame; his health began to give way in 1795, and the next year Robert Burns, most

gifted of Scottish singers, died at the age of thirty-seven. He lies in the old churchyard at Dumfries, and over his bones his countrymen later erected a great mausoleum, more showy no doubt than his own simple taste would approve. At his birthplace and elsewhere noble memorials testify to the love of the Scotch people for his songs.

His Personality.—Burns was a man of masterful passions, of seemingly uncontrollable emotions, and he had the buoyancy of a big boy; out of these grew his failings. He had the defects of his temperament to a marked degree, and these defects have been sufficiently catalogued without the need, even if space permitted, of repeating them here. His inconstancy, his excesses, his convivial temper and weak will—all these illustrate in a pitiful way his own words, "to step aside is human," and make his career "a life of fragments." One is constrained to quote his own lines as the fittest comment:

> The poor inhabitant below
> Was quick to learn, and wise to know,
> And keenly felt the friendly glow,
> And softer flame,
> But thoughtless follies laid him low,
> And stained his name!

But without attempting to hide his faults or to apologize for them, we must not forget the insidiousness of his temptations, the low moral standards of his neighborhood, the general wilfulness of genius, and the grind of poverty. His kindness of heart, his broad and deep humanity, his genial humor, his sincerity, his unfailing patriotism, and above all else, his glorious gift of song, are virtues so great that condemnation is all but lost in a feeling of indulgent compassion.

Works and Literary Characteristics.—Burns's genius is essentially lyric, manifesting itself most truly in love songs, personal tributes, patriotic outbursts, and the like, all direct from the heart and very concrete. He wrote few long poems: the two comparatively long productions which most fitly represent him are "The Cotter's Saturday Night," in the Spenserian stanza, a real-

istic picture of a godly Scotch cottage-home such as he knew in childhood, and "Tam O'Shanter," a rollicking and boisterous tale of a furious ride past Alloway Kirk. "Tam O'Shanter" is a thoroughly characteristic poem, Burns's favorite, in which the high spirits, the outbreaking mirthful humor, of the poet are actually felt by the reader. Among the shorter poems the following are

BIRTHPLACE OF BURNS
Interior and Exterior Views

particularly expressive of Burns's deeper interests—his sympathy, love of woman, love of Scotland, regard for individual worth: "To a Mouse," "To a Mountain Daisy," "Highland Mary," "To Mary in Heaven," "A Red, Red Rose," "I Love My Jean," "Flow Gently, sweet Afton," "Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled," "Bonnie Doon," "John Anderson," "A Man's a Man for a' That." As a sort of apology for his own life, the "Address to the Unco' Guid" should be carefully read.

So fresh and original is Burns's poetry after the long years of hothouse versifying in the eighteenth century, so thoroughly alive are these lyrics, that we ask ourselves where Burns got his impulse. Was he a reader of old ballads, as was Scott? He doubtless read all he could get hold of, but he certainly makes little use of the ballad-form in his own verse. In his childhood he heard from old women of the neighborhood numbers of old Scotch songs and legends, and when he was older he eagerly read collections of these songs made by Allan Ramsay and others. Of course he read the English poets; his "Cotter's Saturday Night" shows indebtedness to Gray and Goldsmith; but his real inspiration came from the Scotch folk-songs in which from his childhood his mind was steeped. To Fergusson and Allan Ramsay, popular poets of the country, he seems to owe most.

It is the chief glory of Burns, however, that he wrote of men and women, animals, flowers, streams, as he saw them, not as books or other men saw them. He plowed up a nest of field mice and forthwith put them with human sympathy into his verse, making at the end a personal application; and so with the daisy: he and the mice and the daisy were having a hard time of it together in this unfeeling world—innocence and beauty and poverty meant suffering. It took mice a long time to get into poetry in the human way. Here was something new, indeed. Burns and Highland Mary kneel beside the stream, dip their hands in together and plight eternal vows; death snatches away full soon this Highland girl: then the lover writes a pathetic lyric in which that parting scene is vividly before us. He stands on the field of Bannockburn nearly five hundred years after the battle, images the situation, and pours forth that thrilling martial lyric, "Scots Wha Hae wi' Wallace Bled." And so we might go on to show how animated and direct the poetry of Burns is, because he gets the thing he is writing about into his emotions and speaks it out hot from his heart.

The obvious characteristics, then, of Burns as a poet are: *First*, he is concerned with things Scotch. He was himself provincial and his poetry is provincial in the best sense: human nature

being fundamentally the same everywhere, he seized upon the universal in the provincial and made it interesting to you and to me, just as Shakespeare did. Great literature is simply an illumination of the usual and the commonplace. Burns's intense patriotism flames through his verse. *Second*, he generally writes out of experience, and consequently his illustrations are so homely, so real, that we are convinced of the poet's truthfulness. This is Burns's sincerity about which Carlyle talks so much. *Third*, Burns is always on the side of the lowly and oppressed, whether man or beast, and hence he is the poet of democracy. He stands for the worth of the individual man and for human brotherhood:

Then let us pray that come it may
(As come it will for a' that)
That Sense and Worth o'er a' the earth
Shall bear the gree an' a' that!
For a' that an' a' that,
It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man the world o'er
Shall brithers be for a' that.

Crabbe, the Realist (1754–1832).—Related to Cowper, Burns, and Wordsworth by the naturalness of his verse depicting rustic life, George Crabbe is the most baldly realistic of the earlier romantic nature poets. Born in Suffolk, befriended by Burke, through whose influence he was given a chaplaincy by the Duke of Rutland, Crabbe spent his long life as a country clergyman devoted to literature. He saw much of the "seamy side of life" in his parish, portraying the people and their surroundings with minute fidelity. The poem which made his reputation is *The Village*, written in rhyming couplets and published in 1783. Crabbe was without the romantic enthusiasm which animates the poetry of Goldsmith and Burns and gives a tinge of idealism to their pictures of common folk. He dwells on the unlovely lot of the poverty-stricken people about him,—the dreary village street and its ragged denizens, the workingmen's lodgings, the unrelieved monotony and wretchedness of dwellers in slums and

workhouses. These excursions into sordid conditions are varied here and there with picturesque descriptions of natural scenery. Crabbe had a sense for the "richness of common things" which we shall find later in Jane Austen, Wordsworth, Dickens, and Charles Kingsley, allying himself unconsciously with the social side of Romanticism. His later works are *The Borough*, *Tales in Verse*, and *Tales of the Hall.*

Blake, the Mystic (1757–1827).—Quite different from Crabbe is the visionary William Blake. He was an engraver by trade, and loved to haunt the gloomy recesses of Westminster Abbey and other London churches, where he would sketch the monuments. Blake's father, a poor London hosier, was a follower of Swedenborg, the religious mystic, and the son possessed in a marked degree some of the characteristics of the Swedenborgians. He was startled by visions in his childhood and youth: once when four years old he screamed with fright because, as he said, he saw God at a window; at another time he saw a tree full of angels, and later on he saw old poets, prophets and heavenly forms; he asserted that he saw the soul of his brother Robert, who had just died, vanishing through the ceiling and clapping its hands. The curious engravings which adorn his own poems, as well as his copies of Young's *Night Thoughts*, Blair's *Grave*, and *Job*, were lovingly wrought out by Blake. He was poor and he was obscure, and yet he wrought his mystic fancies into pictures with unfailing cheerfulness and wrote a number of poems of exquisite lyric quality about animals, children, roses, and trees. Part madman and part mystic (the two are kin), as critics usually classify him, Blake was a genuine lyric poet, recalling the Elizabethan by his passionate imagination and metrical forms. He is a kindred spirit of Wordsworth's in his love of simple things, while his vague raptures suggest Shelley.

The two series of poems most worthy of mention here are *Songs of Innocence* (1789) and *Songs of Experience* (1794). These lyrics were first engraved on copper "with a decorative margin of arabesque design," and printed from the plate on tinted paper, the lettering being in red. The various pictures used by Blake for

adorning his poetry are quite incomprehensible to the unenlightened reader. The song beginning, "Piping down the Valleys Wild," and that beginning, "Tiger, Tiger, Burning Bright," are excellent examples of Blake's verse. A recent writer calls his poetry "a peal of fairy bells from a lonely tower in a strange land." He is a significant figure in the romantic movement. Some insist, indeed, that he is the first genuine romantic poet.

We have now traced the beginnings of the romantic movement from the mid-eighteenth century to the very threshold of the nineteenth. In 1798 a little volume of poems by Wordsworth and Coleridge appeared, called *Lyrical Ballads*, and with this work a new era in English poetry may be said to have begun. We have noted the several leading characteristics of the newer poetry—the return to nature, sympathy for man, reversion to the Elizabethans, and interest in the Middle Ages. We have doubtless observed the tendencies to melancholy in the early romanticists, the morbidness in some, the eccentricities and irregularities in others, and finally, the vague, mystic imagination of Blake. All these are in a sense gropings towards the full-orbed splendor of the romantic movement in the new century.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1740–1798)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. RISE OF THE NOVEL	
Daniel Defoe: Robinson Crusoe (1719) and other stories	Reign of George III, 1760-1820
Samuel Richardson: Pamela (1740), first regular novel; Clarissa Harlowe	
Henry Fielding: Tom Jones, Amelia	India becomes a part of British Empire, 1757
Smollett and Sterne	
II. JOHNSON AND HIS CIRCLE	
Samuel Johnson (1709-1784): English Dictionary (1755), Rambler, Lives of Poets	Wolfe captures Quebec, 1759
Boswell's Life of Johnson	
Oliver Goldsmith: Traveler, Deserted Village, Vicar of Wakefield (1766), Plays	Watt invents the steam engine, 1765
Edmund Burke: Conciliation with America (1775)	
Edward Gibbon: Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire (1788)	Howard visits English prisons, 1774
III. BEGINNINGS OF ROMANTICISM	
The Scotch Poets: Thomson (Seasons, 1730), Beattie, Ramsay	Declaration of American Independence, 1776
Percy's Reliques (Ballads), 1765	
Thomas Gray: Elegy, Odes	
William Cowper (1731-1800): The Task, John Gilpin, Hymns, Letters	Impeachment of Hastings, 1786
Robert Burns (1759-1796): Cotter's Saturday Night, Tam O'Shanter, Lyrics	
William Blake: Songs of Innocence, Songs of Experience	French Revolution begins, 1789

CHIEF CHARACTERISTICS:—The Passing of Classicism; Birth of the Modern Novel; Beginnings of Romanticism; Political and Industrial Expansion.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Seeley's The Expansion of England, Macaulay's essays on Clive and Hastings, Thackeray's The Four Georges, Hale's Men and Manners of the Eighteenth Century.

Literary.—Seccombe's The Age of Johnson (Macmillan), Williams's English Letters and Letter-Writers of the Eighteenth Century, Boswell's Life of Johnson (Everyman's Library), Lives of writers in English Men of Letters Series, Dawson's Makers of Modern English Prose (Revell).

The Novel.—Cross's The Development of the English Novel (Macmillan), Raleigh's The English Novel (Scribners), Burton's Masters of the English Novel (Holt), Dawson's Makers of English Prose Fiction (Revell).

Romanticism.—Phelps's Beginnings of the English Romantic Movement (Ginn), Beers's English Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century (Holt).

Works of the principal writers of this period are easily accessible in annotated editions and in "Everyman's Library" (Dutton).

CHAPTER TEN

THE TRIUMPH OF ROMANTICISM

1798-1837

From the Publication of the "Lyrical Ballads" to the Accession of Victoria

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Revolution and Reform.—The tremendous political and social upheaval known as the French Revolution (1789), shook all western Europe; indeed, the whole civilized world felt directly or indirectly the turmoil which followed. After centuries of oppression the old order was at last overthrown in a reign of terror and frenzy. The younger leaders of political thought in England at first looked on hopefully when the French Republic was established, with its magic watchwords of "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity"; but soon the conservative English mind was shocked by the violence, the blood and fury, of the Revolution across the English Channel. Then came the Napoleonic wars and England was drawn into the conflict to save herself from threatened invasion. The battle of Waterloo (1815) put an end to the designs of Napoleon, and England and the rest of Europe settled down to work in earnest at the problems of constitutional government. The younger literary men in England, such as Wordsworth and Coleridge, in like manner lost their earlier faith in the regenerating power of the French Revolution and turned from the question of social and political reform to communion with nature, to meditation, or to dreaming. Others, such as Byron and Shelley, of more revolutionary temperaments, lashed themselves into fury against society or soared high above the earth. The French Revolution had, notwithstanding this spirit of reaction, exercised a

powerful influence upon the poets, and is to be accounted a significant force in the development of Romanticism.

Meanwhile, be it remembered, another sort of Revolution had taken place across the sea in America, the result in part of the spread of that same passion for liberty which was so violently stirring the peoples of western Europe. The Frenchman Rousseau had years before preached with effect the gospel of Individualism, and the half-fanatic Thomas Paine later had a wide hearing in England and America through his *Rights of Man*, written in the interest of popular liberty. Another book which helped to bring about a different sort of revolution—an economic one—was Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776), in which it is argued that labor is the real source of national wealth. Out of these various revolutionary conditions—political, social, economic—came definite reforms in England. The African slave trade was abolished in 1807; political discrimination against Catholics was done away with in 1829; the Reform Bill conferring suffrage upon the great middle class was passed in 1832; and the next year the slaves in English colonial possessions were set free. Kindred reforms were soon to follow—improvement of laws in regard to child labor, debtors' prisons, workhouses, hospitals, and the like,—the beginnings of that social betterment which the Victorian age was a little later to carry on more systematically.

A Great Creative Age.—When we turn to literature, we find an outburst of creative energy in the first third of the nineteenth century second only to that of the Elizabethan Age. Another Renaissance had come, and the tide was running strong and high. In the new poetry and prose the energizing forces already noted in later eighteenth century literature are working steadily. Back of them is the throb of a prosperous, confident national life. The temper of the time is idealistic. Not since the days of Elizabeth had there been such buoyancy, such dreaming about perfection, such assurance of the fulfilment of visions. That complex and elusive thing called Romanticism—in essence a restoration of emotion to its proper place in literature—shows two fairly well-defined tendencies: the one intensely realistic, a reflection of

common life in poetry and prose fiction; the other highly imaginative, an excursion into the mystic world of dreams, fantastic and weird. Wordsworth and Coleridge respectively represent these two tendencies. In such a period as this poetry is the natural form of expression, even as it was in the days of Shakespeare. Prose was the proper medium in the practical eighteenth century when imagination and emotion were peacefully sleeping. But only poetry could voice such aspirations as the youthful enthusiasts of this era of revolution had. Looking back in after years upon that golden time, Wordsworth exclaimed—

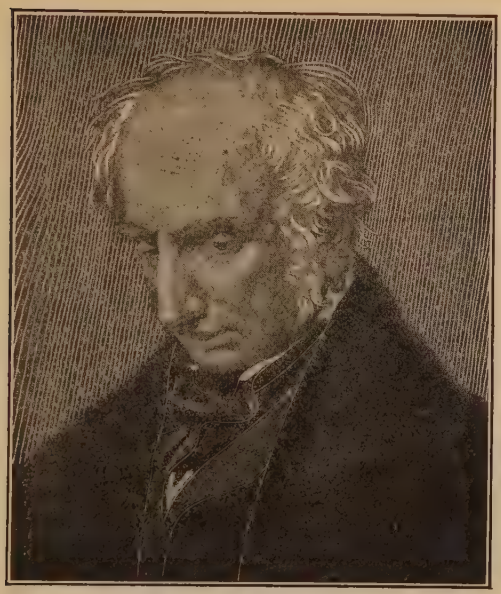
> Bliss was it in that Dawn to be alive,
> But to be young was very heaven!

THE GREATER ROMANTIC POETS

The greater poets of Romanticism are Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, Shelley, Keats. The geographical centers of inspiration were the English Lake District, the Scottish lowlands about the river Tweed, and Italy. Wordsworth and Coleridge were friends and for a time neighbors, forming with Southey the trio sometimes called the "Lake Poets." Scott was the supreme interpreter of Scotch romantic legend; Byron and Shelley spent most of their lives in Italy, and, though different in character, resemble each other in their revolutionary attitude toward society. Keats, who died in Rome, spent most of his brief life in and around London, though his poetry has an antique flavor, remote in subject matter from local and contemporary issues. As Scott is confessedly greater as novelist than as poet, it seems better to consider him a little later under the novelists. Of all these poets Wordsworth is preëminent for his almost religious dedication to his art.

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850)

His Life.—The life of William Wordsworth was outwardly uneventful, and may well be studied in his poetry, for which a walking tour through the English Lake District is unquestionably the best preparation. There is probably no other English poet, not even Scott, whose verse is more



WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

inseparably connected with his native region. Wordsworth was born at Cockermouth, Cumberland, in the northwest corner of the Lake District, in 1770, son of an attorney-at-law. His father and mother died in his early boyhood and his education was directed by his uncles. He attended the Hawkshead Grammar School, and in 1787 entered King's College, Cambridge, from which he received his B. A. in 1791. Both at Hawkshead, a picturesque little village on Esthwaite Water, and at Cambridge, Wordsworth was a serious though not enthusiastic student, his passion for nature leading him to a closer communion with mountain, glen, tree, and flower, than with books. He was a famous climber, walker, skater, and rower. The quiet beauty of the old university town on the Cam, with its elms and willows and grassy banks, strongly appealed to his nature-loving sense.

During the next year or two Wordsworth visited Paris, which was in the throes of Revolution, and then Orleans. Here he met a well-known Republican general from whom he caught an ardor for the revolutionary cause. For a while, indeed, he even thought of joining the revolutionists. Just at this time he was called home, as England was about to take up arms against France. This brief stay had, however, profoundly affected him, though he lost faith in the sincerity of the revolutionists when the move-

ment became a prolonged reign of terror. In 1795 Wordsworth settled down with his sister Dorothy in a cottage in Dorsetshire, a bequest from a friend and a small legacy from his father's estate enabling him to live modestly and give his whole thought to poetry. Soon after this he met Coleridge, with whom a lasting friendship was formed. In order to be near Coleridge, he and Dorothy moved in 1797 to Alfoxden. The next year, 1798, the two friends published a slender volume, *Lyrical Ballads*,

DOVE COTTAGE

The home, at different times, of Wordsworth and De Quincey

containing the famous poems "The Ancient Mariner" and "Tintern Abbey." After spending a winter in Germany, Wordsworth and his sister moved to Grasmere in the English Lake District.

When Wordsworth returned to the Lakes in 1799 he was not quite thirty, and in this charming region he spent the rest of his long life. Dove Cottage, overlooking Grasmere Lake and to-day a favorite shrine of literary pilgrims, was for some years the home of the Wordsworths—a little, low-ceilinged house with tiny rooms, at the foot of a steep hill, where "plain living and high thinking" were to be seen at their best. In 1802 Wordsworth married his cousin, Mary Hutchinson, who, with his sister Dorothy, was the

inspirer of some of his best lyric verse. Never was a poet attended by more devoted and appreciative women. In 1813, after five years spent at Allan Bank near by, the family moved to Rydal Mount, between Grasmere and Ambleside, and there Wordsworth lived for the next thirty-seven years an idyllic life. In 1812 he was appointed distributor of stamps for Westmoreland, a position which he held for thirty years, at the end of which time he was pensioned by the government. Finally, in 1843, on the death of his friend Southey, at Keswick, Wordsworth was made Poet Laureate of England. His poetry brought him little or no income, but fortunately his small legacies, his salary as stamp-distributor, and his pension, enabled him to live comfortably and write poetry. He died in 1850 and was buried in Grasmere churchyard[1] by the side of Dorothy.

His Personality.—Wordsworth composed his verse out of doors as he walked, speaking out the lines, keeping the time or beats by nodding his head or striking one hand into the other. His most characteristic portrait shows his head slightly bent forward as if he were in deep meditation or looking on the ground. He was a profoundly earnest, sedate, and religious man, an integral part of the interesting region in which he spent his life, and of which his own poetry is an illuminated guidebook. His personality has something of the high seriousness of Milton's, though it has less austerity, for Wordsworth had more human tenderness. He lacked a sense of humor, however; this will account for the egotism in some of his utterances which is both amusing and exasperating. Criticism did not annoy him; indeed, he did not read it; he read few books of any kind. Calmness, steadiness, consecration, self-control, reverence, are some of the moral and spiritual qualities that come to mind in reading the works of a man who could early in life write these solemn words about himself:

> I made no vows, but vows
> Were then made for me; bond unknown to me
> Was given, that I should be, else sinning greatly,
> A dedicated Spirit.

His Works.—The little volume of poems called *Lyrical Ballads*, published in 1798, was, as already indicated, something quite new in English poetry, and may be regarded as Romanticism's

[1] See page 353.

declaration of independence. Wordsworth sought to prove that commonplace things and people may be invested with poetic interest, while Coleridge demonstrated in the same volume that the supernatural may be realistically treated. Besides a few simple poems of narrative and descriptive character, such as "Margaret," "Simon Lee," "Peter Bell," "The Idiot Boy," and "The Old Cumberland Beggar," the volume contained that masterpiece of serene and elevated reflection, "Lines Composed a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey": these were all by Wordsworth. Coleridge's ever memorable contribution was "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner." The critics in general treated this little epoch-marking volume with more or less contempt, either ignoring or ridiculing the two great poems which later brought such glory to their respective authors. A few, endowed with more spiritual discernment, saw in them a new order of genius.

To attempt an exhaustive classification of Wordsworth's poetry is impossible here; a few representative poems under several general heads may be mentioned. **Autobiographical and Reflective:** *The Prelude* and *The Excursion*, together the longest of his poems, forming a part of a great work called *The Recluse*, projected but never completed. **Narrative and Pastoral:** "Michael," the pathetic story of an old Cumberland shepherd, one of the most powerful of his poems for its simplicity, restraint, and deep human quality; "White Doe of Rylstone." **Classical Themes:** "Laodamia," "Dion." **Odes and Sonnets:** "Ode on Intimations of Immortality," a supreme lyric utterance; "Ode to Duty," a moral tonic; and the great sonnets, "The World is Too Much with Us," "To Milton," "Toussaint L'Ouverture," "Westminster Bridge," "To B. R. Haydon," "It is a Beauteous Evening," "Afterthought." These sonnets are among the greatest in all literature; no poet since Milton has put such solemn music and meaning into this fourteen-line form. **Short Ballads and Lyrics:** "We are Seven," "Lucy Gray," "To the Cuckoo," "My Heart Leaps Up," "At the Grave of Burns," "The Solitary Reaper," the three "Yarrows," "She was a Phantom of Delight," "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud," "To a Skylark." To this brief

enumeration should be added the less commonly known and read "Character of the Happy Warrior," one of the most bracing of Wordsworth's poems on duty.

Source and Inspiration of His Poetry.—Out of his close fellowship with nature grew most of Wordsworth's verse. His relation to nature is entirely intimate and personal—a relation not hitherto found in literary history. With him, therefore, a new era of nature-feeling begins, and succeeding poets and novelists have, whether they always recognized it or not, owed him an immense debt. In Wordsworth's work there are, when we try to analyze it, found to be two dominating ideas: first, the worth and dignity of man as man, out of which spring his poems on common life, revealing his interest in rustics, children, idiots, and beggars, as fit subjects for imaginative treatment; and, second, the power of nature to comfort, teach, and elevate man through his communion with her,—a communion which may vary all the way from simple outward delight in nature to an inward, mystical relation between man and nature.

This sense of intimacy with nature, based on an almost inspired insight into her hidden meaning, finds expression in "Tintern Abbey," an earlier poem, the serene and blessed tone of which, when read aloud, calms and elevates the spirit:

> For I have learned
> To look on nature, not as in the hour
> Of thoughtless youth; but hearing oftentimes
> The still, sad music of humanity,
> Nor harsh, nor grating, though of ample power
> To chasten and subdue. And I have felt
> A presence that disturbs me with the joy
> Of elevated thoughts, a sense sublime
> Of something far more deeply interfused,
> Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
> And the round ocean and the living air,
> And the blue sky, and in the mind of man:
> A motion and a spirit, that impels
> All thinking things, all objects of all thought,
> And rolls through all things.

In this poem and in the great "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" are to be found the highest reaches of Wordsworth's genius. The Immortality ode begins with a tone of lament for the loss of vision and glory of childhood, that inborn sense of immortality so darkly obscured by the "philosophic years" of manhood; gradually the conviction grows that something of that "primal sympathy" and clear intention still remain,—

> To perish never,
> Which neither listlessness, nor mad endeavour,
> Nor man nor boy,
> Nor all that is at enmity with joy,
> Can utterly abolish or destroy!

The poem ends in a burst of gratitude for the abiding faith "that looks through death," and for the power to recognize the significance of common things:

> Thanks to the human heart by which we live,
> Thanks to its tenderness, its joys, and fears,
> To me the meanest flower that blows can give
> Thoughts that do often lie too deep for tears.

The real emphasis in the poem is, of course, not on the mystic doctrine of reminiscence, or preëxistence, but on the intuitive assurance of immortality in the soul of man. This lofty and musical poem should be committed to memory by every young student who would make his mind a "mansion for all lovely forms."

His Theory of Poetry.—Wordsworth, unlike most poets, took pains to formulate a theory of poetry, from which, fortunately, he departed in his higher moods. In the preface to the second edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* he had expressed his conviction that the subject matter of poetry should be the objects of common life imaginatively treated in the language of prose, the "language really used" by men in humble and rustic life; and that "there neither is nor can be any essential difference between the language of prose and verse." This contention was considerably modified in practice, for Wordsworth was not a dramatist; he could not reproduce the raciness of rustic speech, even if he had wished to

do so. He was simply pleading for greater simplicity of diction in poetry, freedom from the artificial tricks of the eighteenth century poets, and this simplicity of diction is a striking characteristic of Wordsworth's poetry.

Wordsworth's poetry inculcates lessons of sympathy, serenity, assurance, faith in man and God, and hope; in it there is counsel and sound philosophy, and there is "joy in widest commonalty spread." He declared that "Every great poet is a teacher; I wish to be considered as a teacher, or as nothing." And the ultimate purpose of his verse, he wrote in a letter to Lady Beaumont, was "to console the afflicted, to add sunshine to daylight by making the happy happier, to teach the young and gracious of every age to see, think, and feel, and therefore, to become more actively and sincerely virtuous."

The limitations of Wordsworth are evident enough: he is sometimes prolix and tedious; he has little dramatic power; and hence the young reader, who likes action, is apt at first to find him dull. Undoubtedly, great stretches of his poetry are prosaic and may be passed over. But when all has been said, the impressive fact remains that Wordsworth's poetry is a fountain of refreshment and consolation and that he who learns to love it will find in it perpetual spiritual enrichment. He is a poet whom one cannot outgrow, so deeply rooted is he in reality, so steadfastly true is he to the primal instincts of the human spirit, and so soundly beneficent is the example of his own dedicated life.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE (1772-1834)

> Last night he (Coleridge) concluded his fine development of the Prince of Denmark by an eloquent statement of the moral of the play. "Action," he said, "is the great end of all; no intellect, however grand, is valuable, if it draw us from action and lead us to think and think until the time of action is passed by, and we can do nothing." Somebody said to me, "This is a satire on himself." "No," said I, "it is an elegy."—From the *Diary of Henry Crabbe Robinson.*

His Life.—Very different from that of the serene and steady Wordsworth is the career of his friend, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, poet, critic, philosopher,

and marvelous talker. Born in 1772 at Ottery St. Mary's in Devonshire, where his father, learned and eccentric, was vicar and schoolmaster, Coleridge was early left an orphan. So precocious was he—he had read the Bible and the *Arabian Nights* by the time he was five—that at ten he was sent, through the kindness of a friend, to Christ's Hospital School, London, where he remained eight or nine years. Here he met Charles Lamb, who later wrote so delightfully of him as "the inspired charity boy."[1] A brilliant but irregular student, Coleridge was ever a unique figure: he spouted philosophy, recited Homer, explored the fields about London, delighted in the grim sights of the old Tower, lay on hot nights flat on his back on the roof of the school building gazing at the stars and muttering strange fancies. Altogether, he was quite incomprehensible to the other "blue-coat boys," with whom, it is said, he associated very little. In 1791 he entered Jesus College, Cambridge, where he remained, with short periods of absence—as, for instance, a brief stay in London as member of the Dragoons—for three or four years, leaving without his degree.

While at the University, Coleridge had written several poems; he was better known, however, as the leading spirit among a band of youthful champions of the liberal ideas for which the French Revolution stood. He had meanwhile formed a friendship with Southey, who was at Oxford, and the two young enthusiasts planned an ideal community on the banks of the Susquehanna in America (the name "Susquehanna" had a romantic sound to them). Lack of funds, together with the marriage of the two young men about this time, indefinitely delayed this Utopian scheme, poetically named Pantisocracy[2] and dreamed of as a social Eden. For the next two or three years Coleridge lectured, wrote poetry, planned a new literary periodical, *The Watchman*—actually started, but soon discontinued,—and even preached, having temporarily turned Unitarian. In 1797 he met Wordsworth, and so intimate did the friendship with the Wordsworths become, that Wordsworth and Dorothy rented a cottage near Coleridge who was now living at Nether Stowey in Dorsetshire. The next year, as already related, Coleridge and Wordsworth together brought out the *Lyrical Ballads*, then went to the continent. Coleridge spent over a year in Germany learning the language and studying German philosophy. He returned in 1799, and the next year moved to the Lakes to be near Southey and Wordsworth.

From 1800 to the end, Coleridge's life is a series of plannings, brief periods of real work, and pathetic failures. Several years before, he had contracted the opium-habit, having taken the drug at first to relieve neu-

[1] See Lamb's Essay, *Christ's Hospital Five and Thirty Years Ago.*

[2] Meaning "government by all in common"—an ideal commonwealth, like the later "Brook Farm" experiment in Massachusetts.

ralgic pains and then to get relief from mental disquiet at his failures and domestic unhappiness. Offered positions on London papers as contributor and critic, Coleridge accepted and for a short time worked steadily; then resigned, turned to lecturing—at which he was successful until he lost his audiences by failing to keep engagements,—planned a great work, actually wrote a literary autobiography and a series of reflections on philosophy, but really completed nothing. He had spent the years 1800-1816 mostly near Keswick in the Lake District and in London.

In 1816 he went to Dr. Gillman's at Highgate, a London suburb, and there as the "Sage of Highgate" he spent the rest of his life. His friend Gillman virtually succeeded in curing him of the opium habit by gradually reducing the daily amount to a minimum. In this friendly haven Coleridge, removed from the cares of practical life by the generosity of admirers, lived for eighteen years a striking figure, visited by famous pilgrims, among them Lamb, Carlyle, Emerson, and Harriet Martineau—drawn thither by his reputation as the most wonderful converser of the age. Here in 1834 the end came peacefully, and the poet-philosopher was laid to rest in Highgate Church.

His Personality.—Extraordinarily gifted, pathetically irresolute, brilliant architect of structures unfinished, Coleridge the man is an illustration of tragic will-weakness. He could plan gloriously, but he was rarely able to execute fully. He was zigzagging all his life. The best picture of Coleridge is the word painting by Carlyle who visited him at Highgate and heard him talk: "Brow and head were round and of massive weight, but the face was flabby and irresolute. The deep eyes, of a light hazel, were as full of sorrow as of inspiration; confused pain looked mildly from them, as in a kind of mild astonishment. The whole figure and air, good and amiable otherwise, might be called flabby and irresolute; expressive of weakness under possibility of strength. He hung loosely on his limbs, with knees bent, and stooping attitude; in walking he rather shuffled than decisively stept; and a lady once remarked he never could fix which side of the garden walk would suit him best, but continually shifted, corkscrew fashion, and kept trying both."

The familiar story about the meeting of Lamb and Coleridge in a London street, while doubtless an exaggeration, illustrates Coleridge's habit of prolonged talk regardless of circumstances:

Coleridge met Lamb in a crowded street, caught him by a button on his coat and drew him aside into a doorway or passage, where he poured forth for an hour in even tones an unbroken monologue, keeping his eyes shut most of the time, as was his wont. Lamb, having other business, gently cut off the button and went his way, and on returning several hours later found Coleridge still holding the button and still talking. Despite his flabbiness of will, Coleridge had one of the keenest, most logical minds of the century as well as a great imagination and delicate sympathies.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—The work of Coleridge falls into three fairly well-defined divisions—Poetry, Criticism, Philosophy. His most noteworthy poems are: "The Ancient Mariner," published in the *Lyrical Ballads*, and owing a suggestion —the shooting of the albatross—to Wordsworth; "Christabel," incomplete; "Kubla Khan," a fragment of fifty-four lines; "Ode to France," "Dejection," "Youth and Age," "Hymn Before Sunrise in the Vale of Chamouni." To these should be added his translation of Schiller's *Wallenstein*, in some respects an improvement on the original. Small in volume though it is, Coleridge's verse is in quality among the finest in English literature. The most significant of his prose works are the *Biographia Literaria, or Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions*, and *Lectures on Shakespeare*, both abounding in sane and illuminating expositions of poetic theory and dramatic art; and the *Aids to Reflection*, a discussion of German idealistic philosophy.

Coleridge held that the peculiar province of the poet is to make the supernatural, the weird, the impossible, seem natural by a realistic treatment,—that is, by the use of easily understood words and images. This theory finds perfect illustration in his greatest poem, "The Ancient Mariner." "The Ancient Mariner" is a romantic ballad having to do with absurdly unreal things—ghosts, a phantom ship, strange voices, magic winds, unearthly music, a curse and expiation—so plausibly told that we almost believe it a true account of an adventure in far-off seas. Then, too, the moral is so wholesome that we are willing to credit the queer story for the light it throws on the redeeming power of

love. "Charity never faileth," even in the case of sinning mariners on impossible seas. This is, indeed, a great ballad of charity: love heals and restores; hate alienates and destroys. The lesson is stated at the end; we lose connection with God when we cease to love His creatures:

> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small;
> For the dear God who loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

In "Christabel," which has a delicately mediaeval flavor, a beautiful young girl suffers from the malign influence of a witch, or sorceress, disguised under the fair form of the Lady Geraldine. The poem is a fragment; after writing the first part, Coleridge somehow lost the thread of inspiration, and, though he intended all his life to complete the story, he was never able to do so. The poem, entrancingly beautiful in its twilight region between the real and dreamful, abruptly ends at a critical point, and the outcome is left to fancy. "Kubla Khan," another fragment, is full of verbal harmonies. After he had written fifty-four lines, the poet was suddenly called out on business, and the rest of the poem—a dream of the morning—vanished from Coleridge's brain. It is interesting to note that in the matter of moral suggestion, as seen in "The Ancient Mariner," Coleridge and the American Hawthorne are not unlike, while in verbal music Coleridge and Poe resemble each other: all these are alike in their fondness for weird, uncanny themes. This love of the mysterious is the very essence of Romanticism.

Coleridge is one of the acutest and soundest of literary critics, as a reading of his *Biographia Literaria* will make clear. This book is very largely a discussion of Wordsworth's theory of poetry, with which, it is by this time evident, he only partly agreed. Coleridge preferred to apply simple, imaginative treatment to the unusual, while Wordsworth, as already pointed out, idealizes familiar things. Next to his reputation as a poet is Coleridge's fame as a Shakespearean critic. His lectures on the plays are

to-day among the most discriminating judgments ever pronounced on the great dramatist. Because he interpreted the plays directly and naturally, Coleridge deserves to be called the first modern Shakespeare critic. Finally, by bringing back from Germany the new idealistic philosophy known as "Transcendentalism," he helped to counteract the baneful effects of the English Materialists and to influence English thought for fifty years. Carlyle owed much to Coleridge, as did Emerson and the other New England Transcendentalists.

THE POETS OF REVOLT: BYRON AND SHELLEY

Byron and Shelley are regarded as the most revolutionary of the Romantic poets. They reflect both in their lives and writings the spirit of social revolt which we associate with those unsettled times immediately following the French Revolution. Both rebelled against established customs and angrily left England for Italy, restless exiles the rest of their short lives. Though they differed widely in temperament and poetic expression, they are not unlike in their attitude toward conservative England, and in their tragic, almost spectacular deaths—the one romantically contending for Greek freedom, the other battling with the storm in the darkened Mediterranean. Compared with the serene and steady Wordsworth and Scott, or even with the irresolute Coleridge, Byron and Shelley are like wanderers over unquiet seas. Of the two Bryon has excited the greater popular interest; for many years after his death, "Byronism" had a fascination for sentimentalists; then his fame suffered a slight eclipse. More lately, however, the man and the poet have been accorded a more discriminating treatment. Shelley's fame, of slower growth, has suffered no reaction: he has long held a secure place among the supreme lyric poets of the world.

GEORGE GORDON BYRON (1788-1824)

His Life.—George Gordon Byron was born in London in 1788, son of Captain Jack Byron and Katherine Gordon of Aberdeen. On his father's side

BYRON IN ORIENTAL COSTUME

he was descended from the Scandinavian Vikings and on his mother's from the Scotch Highlanders. This is worth remembering in an estimate of his life. His father was a wild, dissipated army-captain who deserted his wife when Byron was a child. Left to the care of his mother, the boy, moody and sensitive because of a deformed foot, found in her alternate fits of temper and affection a source of unhappiness. She caressed him one minute and called him a "lame brat" the next. This early home-life naturally affected his career, making an already violent disposition lawless and defiant. He first went to school in Aberdeen, whither his parents had gone when he was a baby; then he was taken to London and next to Dulwich Academy, and finally to Harrow, the great preparatory school for the universities. At ten Byron had become "Lord Byron by the death of a great uncle, from whom he inherited the ancestral estate of Newstead. Somewhat unpopular at school because of his shy, sensitive, and rebellious nature, he nevertheless proved himself a good swimmer and rider, even if he was a poor student.

At Trinity College, Cambridge, where he matriculated in 1805, his life was notoriously irregular, though not so lawless as his earlier biographers

would have us believe. He kept a coach, a valet, dogs, and a pet bear, and delighted in shocking the authorities whom he regarded as narrow and bigoted. The contradictions and perversities which characterize Byron's whole life are conspicuous in his Cambridge career; for while he was an indifferent student—the consequences of which are to be seen in occasional grammatical and rhetorical lapses in his poetry,—he was at the same time a wide reader; his favorite books, oddly enough, were the Old Testament and Pope's poems.

In 1808 Byron left the University without a degree, went to London and took his seat in the House of Lords; but disappointed at his cold reception, he proceeded to Newstead and indulged in a prolonged carouse with some jolly companions; then went to the continent for two years, during which he began *Childe Harold*, besides writing shorter poems. When the first part of *Childe Harold* was published in 1812, he "awoke and found himself famous." Society praised and petted and indulged the young lion, and mothers with marriageable daughters smiled upon him. In 1815 he married Miss Milbanke. The next year they separated and were never reconciled. No one knows the exact cause of the trouble; "incompatibility of temper" is the handiest phrase with which to dismiss the matter.[1] A great hue and cry was raised against Byron; the popular idol became the outcast of society. In anger and disgust he left England forever in 1816.

The remaining eight years of Byron's life were spent for the most part in Italy at Venice, Ravenna, Pisa, Genoa. He lived with the Shelleys for a while at Geneva, and then passed on into Italy. The influence of Shelley proved distinctly beneficial to him, and it is a pity he did not have more of that restraining companionship. But Byron must be Byron; tired of dreams and inaction, he passed on to Venice. In that gay city he plunged into the wildest dissipation. His health began to give way. About this time he formed a connection with the Countess Guiccioli at Ravenna; as culpable as that relationship was, it at least saved him from the headlong ruin of his previous Venetian life. He now wrote much poetry with amazing rapidity; planned an editorial partnership with Leigh Hunt at Pisa on *The Liberal*, a new journal in the interest of Italian freedom, of which Byron was a strenuous advocate; and saw more of Shelley and other Englishmen.

In 1823 Byron resolved to go to Greece and take part in the struggle for freeing that classic land from Turkish rule. He fitted out a yacht with his own money and along with his friend Trelawney and a trusty crew set sail for Greece. There in 1824 he was made commander-in-chief of a band of Greeks, whom he controlled and won by his great personal charm. Stricken with a fever, he lingered for two months or more, dying at Missolonghi,

[1] See Hinchman and Gummere's *Lives of Great English Writers*, pp. 372-375, for a fresh and interesting discussion of the case.

April 19, 1824, in his thirty-seventh year. Greece mourned and old chieftains wept over the dead champion of liberty. "Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it." Three months before, as if with a premonition of the end, he had written this noble stanza:

> If thou regretst thy life—why live?
> The land of honourable death
> Is here—up to the field and give
> Away thy breath.

Refused a tomb in Westminster Abbey, he was buried at Newstead Abbey, his ancestral seat.

His Personality.—There was a Byron of weakness, vanity, insufferable egotism, and there was a Byron of strength and sincerity. He had a fondness for shocking conventionally proper people, and he liked to pose as the injured idol of society, with a kind of morbid enjoyment of any dramatic situation of which he found himself the center; he was a man of moods, out of which grew his sentimental melancholy as well as his cynical defiance. On the other hand, there is the Byron who hated shams and bigotry, the man of immense industry when the working mood was on him, the abstemious athlete who could swim the Hellespont and control rebellious soldiers, and endure cold and hunger; and, finally, there is the Byron who writes tenderly of his daughter, forgivingly of Lady Byron and her companions, affectionately of his friends, and devotedly to his stepsister Augusta. All these traits are in the man, not so bad at heart as weak, and in his passionate ravings more childish than criminal. In his nobler moments he was a passionate defender of liberty; and when it is remembered that he lived in a revolutionary age, that he had in his veins the fiery blood of Viking and Highlander, and that in his youth he lacked wise direction, his strenuous life of combat against what he considered social and political oppression has in it the redeeming qualities of sincerity and strength.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—Byron's poetry may be conveniently classified as follows: (1) **Shorter Poems of Lyric Nature,** such as those embraced in *Hours of Idleness* (1807) and

Hebrew Melodies; (2) **Narrative,** such as "Mazeppa" and "Prisoner of Chillon"; (3) **Descriptive of Travels:** *Childe Harold* (1812), a record of personal impressions; (4) **Satires,** such as *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers, Don Juan,* and *The Vision of Judgment*; (5) **Oriental Tales,** such as the "Bride of Abydos" and the "Giaour; and (6) **Dramas,** such as *Manfred, Cain, Marino Faliero,* etc.

Byron is part classicist: his satires, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* and *Vision of Judgment,* are a continuation of the manner of Dryden and Pope, of whom he was a great admirer. We have the cut and sting of the epigrammatic rhyming couplet. Byron lashed his enemies unmercifully, but he lacks the finished art of the great masters of satire. He is at his best in narrative and descriptive verse, such as that found in "Mazeppa" and the "Prisoner of Chillon" and especially in *Childe Harold,* in many respects his greatest poem, and in the oriental poems like the "Bride of Abydos." Here he gives his genius for rapid narration full sway, with the result that the reader is borne along on a dashing adventure, the pleasure of which is enhanced by stretches of splendid description. No wonder Scott turned from poetry to novel writing when *Childe Harold* and the other great poems of Byron caught the popular fancy and showed the "wizard of the North" that a poetic rival was about to supplant him.

The dramas have fine passages in them, but they are too self-centered, too personal, too rhetorical, for real plays. There is little or no action; it is Byron on the stage declaiming all the time; there is little variety in the long monologues under different names, but really uttered by the same man posing variously. *Marino Faliero,* the tragic story of the conspiring Doge of Venice, is perhaps the most dramatic, though *Manfred* is more romantic. Scattered through the longer poems and the dramas are lyrics of wonderful power and beauty, as "The Isles of Greece," in *Don Juan.* Whenever Byron sang of Greece it was in tones of passionate devotion, for no other Romantic poet felt more deeply than Byron that "homesickness for classic antiquity," which was a characteristic of Romanticism. He gave us a new sense of appreciation of the Orient and of the picturesque features of the conti-

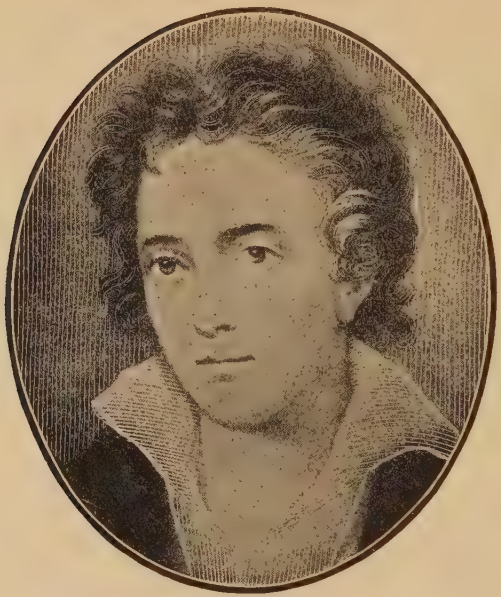
nent of Europe—its rivers, mountains, and lakes. Greece and Rome come to life again in his verse; the grandeur and gloom of the Alps cast their magic spell around us; and we are made to feel the loneliness and loveliness of the ocean. No other poet has so reflected in his verse the terrible aspects of nature. Herein Byron is in sharp contrast with Wordsworth.

This bold and dashing treatment of man and nature made Byron the best known English poet on the continent of Europe. His influence there was immense; a Byronic cult sprang up, which has not wholly died out yet. Byron lacks supreme imagination, delicacy, sensitiveness, and the "divine faculty of meditation"; he is not a great creative genius, but in masculine vigor, in vividness, in unrestrained movement, and in magnificent rhetoric, his poetry is at once vital and eloquent.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY (1792-1822)

> The universe is his box of toys. He dabbles his fingers in the dayfall. He is gold-dusty with tumbling amid the stars. He makes bright mischief with the moon. The meteors nuzzle their noses in his hand. He teases into growling the kennelled thunder, and laughs at the shaking of its fiery chain. He dances in and out of the gates of Heaven: its floor is littered with his broken fancies. He runs wild over the fields of ether. He chases the rolling world.—*Francis Thompson on Shelley.*

His Life.—Percy Bysshe Shelley, most ethereal of English poets, was born at Field Place, Sussex, in 1792, the son of Sir Timothy Shelley, a baronet of prosaic temperament and conventional ideas. Young Shelley was of highly imaginative nature and peopled the region with strange beings about whom he told his sisters wild stories. At Eton, where he was sent to be prepared for the university, Shelley spent most of his time reading books not in the prescribed course, and performing scientific experiments. His schoolfellows could not understand the shy, sensitive, eccentric youth, who took no part in their sports and rebelled against the system of "fagging." In 1810 Shelley went to University College, Oxford. He was full of enthusiasm, his friend Hogg tells us, for all sorts of reform and for the marvels of science, and kept his room littered with chemical apparatus. Disgusted



PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

at the intolerance of Oxford, the young philosopher wrote and published a tract on *The Necessity of Atheism,* which caused his expulsion from the University. It was an impulsive, boyish utterance, and would not cause a ripple of excitement in the Oxford of to-day. Shelley went, along with Hogg, who thoroughly sympathized with him, to London. There he met Harriet Westbrook, a schoolmate of his two sisters, who said that she was being persecuted at the boarding school for her liberal opinions. Shelley's liberty-loving sympathies were aroused and he chivalrously and precipitately married the pretty girl. His father, greatly offended at this, to say nothing of the Oxford affair, promptly disinherited the youth of nineteen with his sixteen-year-old wife. An uncle came to the rescue and saved the two from abject poverty.

All went well for two or three years. Shelley wrote poems and also reform pamphlets, the latter for the cause of Catholic emancipation in Ireland. Meanwhile he had made the acquaintance of William Godwin, the socialist writer, and in 1814 he met Godwin's daughter Mary, intellectual and beautiful. Deserting Harriet, with whom there had been some disagreement, Shelley eloped with Mary Godwin to Switzerland. Two

years later, 1816, after Harriet's death, they were formally married. The desertion of Harriet is the one serious blot on Shelley's character. The marriage was hasty and there had been no real love, certainly on Shelley's part; Mary Godwin was a kindred spirit and socially equal. All this, however, does not excuse the violation of sacred and social laws; but, along with another consideration—Shelley's irresponsible nature—it throws light on the matter, if it does not condone it. But for the death of his grandfather about this time, Shelley would have been in dire straits; on the thousand pounds a year from the estate he lived comfortably and gave, besides, much in practical charity. The two years from 1816 to 1818 Shelley spent partly in Switzerland, partly in England at Great Marlow, on the Thames, where he met Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, John Keats, and other notable men and where he wrote several of his best poems, among them "Alastor." In 1818, because of bad health and hostile criticism, Shelley left England for sunny Italy.

The four remaining years of Shelley's life were spent at various places in Italy—Venice, Florence, Pisa, Rome, Naples,—but he lived longest at Pisa and at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezzia. He was with Byron from time to time and came to know him well; though different in character, the two men were drawn together by their love of liberty and beauty. Trelawney, an art-loving Englishman, and Leigh Hunt were much with the Shelleys. At Rome in 1819 Shelley wrote most of *Prometheus Unbound* and the *Cenci*, two of his greatest works, sitting amid the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla or the Colosseum. That year was the most fertile of his short life. Early in July, 1822, Shelley went in a sailboat to meet Leigh Hunt at Leghorn; on the return trip to Lerici, July 8, the little boat ran into a violent squall and was lost. Ten days later Shelley's body was washed ashore; in his pockets were a copy of Sophocles and a volume of Keats. The body was burned in the presence of Byron, Trelawney, and Leigh Hunt, and the ashes buried in the English cemetery at Rome not far from the grave of Keats. Following the name are the words, "Cor Cordium," and these lines from Ariel's song in the *Tempest:*

> Nothing of him that doth fade,
> But doth suffer a sea-change
> Into something rich and strange.

His Personality.—Personal beauty combined with mental energy, a passion for liberty, and the most delicate poetic sensibility,—these are the striking characteristics of Shelley. He never lost his boyish appearance and he would 'blush like a girl' when meeting strangers; he had at times a deer-like, startled look

and a swift way of gliding in and out of a company, which reminds one of the line in "Adonais,"—

A pardlike Spirit, beautiful and swift.

The general impression which one gets from reading Hogg's account of Shelley, is that of a radiant, eager, unworldly creature of sympathetic impulses and pure ideals. An ardent lover of abstract liberty and of toleration, he hated all kinds of persecution and sought to enthrone reason and to dethrone what he in common with other revolutionary enthusiasts of the time regarded as superstition or blind adherence to social, political, and religious tradition. Out of this attitude grew his professed atheism. For the personality of Christ he had, however, a real veneration, while his spirit of practical philanthropy is shown in his work among the suffering poor while he was living at Great Marlow, as well as in his generosity to struggling friends.

Shelley was an active, though idealistic, reformer, and his carefully written out declaration of principles, together with statements in his letters, reveal a fundamental kinship with more practical and constructive defenders of liberty, such, for instance, as the author of the American Declaration of Independence. A careful reading of Shelley's prose will bring increased respect for him as a thinker. Had he lived longer, this "immortal child," this "beautiful and ineffectual angel," might have given his visionary idealism a steadier, soberer tone.

Shelley's Poetry.—Among the poems composed by Shelley in England, the most important are: *Queen Mab* (1813), a crude and immature tirade against tyranny and superstition expressed in oriental imagery, a poem never publicly printed with Shelley's consent; *Alastor* (1815), a blank-verse poem of delicate romantic beauty unfolding the dreams of a wandering poet-spirit, suggestive here and there of Wordsworth's manner; *The Revolt of Islam* (1817), a long work in the Spenserian stanza on the struggle of a youth and a maiden to bring to pass for the good of humanity their dreams of ideal liberty—a "romance of revolution," it has

been called; and the exquisite "Hymn to Intellectual Beauty" (1816), in which Shelley dedicates himself to the Spirit of Freedom.

The four years in Italy brought forth such supreme lyrics as "The Skylark," "Ode to the West Wind," "The Cloud," "The Sensitive Plant," "The Indian Serenade"; and the longer poems, *Lines on the Euganean Hills*, *Epipsychidion*, *Prometheus Unbound*, *The Cenci*, and *Adonais*. The shorter poems, it will be noted, deal with clouds, winds, high-soaring birds, and the like, which Shelley, by some subtle magic, makes one with his own spirit: he mingles with the clouds, becomes an elemental part of the west wind, is himself the singing skylark and the delicate plant. He loved to write out in the wind and feel its breath, or hide himself in clouds of mist along the streams or in the mountains; and thus he seems to lose himself in the elements.

This spirit-like mingling with nature gives his poetry that elusive, rainbow quality, that ethereal coloring, and those dreamy cadences which haunt one's imagination and baffle analysis. He is the poet of impalpable dreams, of winds and clouds, of unearthly loveliness, of cavernous gloom and visionary gleams. It is all far removed from the ordinary attitude of mind. Now and then, in rare moments of detachment from the practical concerns of life, we may get in sight of his bright world, but we cannot live there habitually. We may catch the flutter of his "luminous wings," we may see in a radiant moment the sheen of the star dust on them as he passes us in his meteoric flight, and then we lose the gleam and even doubt the vision, so hard is it to "see Shelley plain."

His is the most ethereal poetry in our literature, the pure essence of song "unmixed with baser matter," the highest lyric reach, the utterance of a disembodied spirit that breathes

> On the brink of the night and the morning,

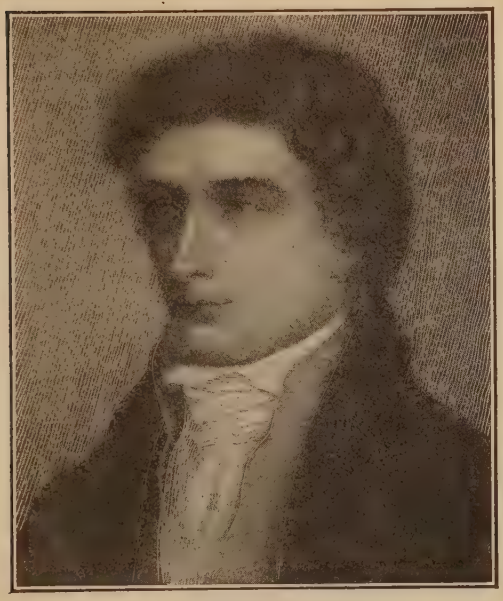
and drinks of "the whirlwind's stream." It has little positive ethical quality, though it vaguely suggests high and holy ardors, enthusiasm for truth and freedom, and a passion for ideal beauty. It is the poetry of eternal youth and radiant hope.

All things considered, the greatest of Shelley's works are *Adonais* and *Prometheus Unbound*. *Adonais* is an elegy on the death of John Keats, between whom and Shelley there existed a poetic rather than a personal friendship. The pathos of Keats's early death and the unjust attacks on his poetry by the reviewers aroused Shelley's sympathy and indignation, and the result was *Adonais*, one of the three supreme elegies in our language, the others being Milton's *Lycidas* and Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. In *Adonais* Shelley is less vague than usual; the verse shows more restraint, and leads one to speculate on what the years might have done toward ripening his art. The undertone of melancholy in *Adonais* —heard in all of Shelley's greatest verse (compare lines in "The Skylark")—and the strong personal note, give to this poem, in view of Shelley's tragic death the following year, a peculiar interest.

Prometheus Unbound is a drama on the redemption of mankind from the tyranny of tradition, one of the most splendid creations of the human mind. Prometheus stands for humanity, which has been chained to a rock by Jupiter, who stands for the shackling power of superstition and tradition. By the might of Demogorgon, who is Revolution, Prometheus (mankind) is set free from the tyrant, and, united to Asia, the spirit of love and man's ideal, lives triumphant in a reign of universal peace. This great drama of love and hope is the finest expression of revolution literature among the poets of Romanticism. Its abstruse and shadowy allegory is varied by some of the most enchantingly beautiful lyrics in English poetry. *Prometheus Unbound* is a gorgeous rhapsody on human freedom.

JOHN KEATS (1795-1821)

His Life.—John Keats, youngest of the greater romantic poets, was born in London in 1795, the son of Thomas Keats, a livery-stable keeper. He attended a school at Enfield, near London, where his courage and generosity made him exceedingly popular. Young Keats was a good fighter and a successful student. Charles Cowden Clarke, the son of the headmaster of the school, encouraged him to read the English poets, lending him, among others, a volume of Spenser. The reading of *The Faerie Queene* may be



JOHN KEATS

said to have determined the course of Keats's life; for although he left school at fifteen—his father and mother having meanwhile died—and apprenticed himself to a surgeon, his mind was more on poetry than on anatomy. Still, he studied medicine for several years, served in the London hospitals, and creditably passed his final examinations at Apothecaries' Hall. But he had little enthusiasm for his profession, as may be inferred from his oft-quoted remark to Cowden Clarke: "The other day, during the lecture, there came a sunbeam into the room, and with it a whole troop of creatures floating in the ray; and I was off with them to Oberon and fairyland." Shortly after this he met Leigh Hunt, the rising editor, poet, and liberal, who praised some poems Keats had written, and urged him to give his life to literature. This Keats decided to do, and with the publication of his first volume of poems in 1817 formally dedicated himself to poetry.

With rare consecration he now set to work to perfect himself in his art, studying, reading, writing. Meanwhile, he was making many valuable friendships: he met Shelley, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Lamb, and Hazlitt; but more intimate than with any of these was his association with Charles Armitage Brown and the artist Joseph Severn, both of whom loved and

generously befriended him. Most of the years of active authorship, from 1817 to 1820, were spent in and around London, chiefly at Hampstead, though Keats made trips to Scotland, the Lake District, and other parts of the country. Feeling the need of wider knowledge and experience, he wrote in 1818: "For although I take poetry to be chief, yet there is something else wanting to one who passes his life among books. * * * * *I find there is no worthy pursuit, but the idea of doing some good to the world * * * * There is but one way for me. The road lies through application, s t u d y, and thought * * * * I will pursue it, and for that end purpose retiring s o m e years." He spent four months tramping in the Highlands, because he thought it "would give me more experience, rub off more prejudice, use me to more hardship, identify finer scenes, * * * and strengthen more my reach in poetry than would stopping at home among my books."

KEATS-SHELLEY MEMORIAL AT ROME
House in which Keats died

The reviewers, especially the editor of the *London Quarterly*, had been inexcusably severe in their criticisms of *Endymion*, which appeared in 1818; but their hostility did not kill John Keats. Indeed, he took these strictures very calmly. There was, however, a more insidious foe lying in wait for him than hide-bound reviewers. As early as 1817, Coleridge, after shaking hands with Keats one day, remarked to a friend, when the young poet had passed on: "There is death in that hand." So it proved to be. In 1819 his health began to give way, and by the summer of 1820, he was seriously ill and could not think of spending the winter in

England. His friends urged him to go to Italy, and Joseph Severn volunteered to accompany him. There were no near kin upon whom he could depend: his brother Tom had died of consumption, and George was in America. Keats had become engaged to Fanny Brawne, but his failing health and comparative poverty made marriage out of the question. To Rome along with his devoted friend Severn he went in the fall of 1820. The rest of this brave struggle against disease was in the "Eternal City" at the house on the Piazza di Spagna which is now, thanks to English and American admirers, the Keats-Shelley Memorial. Here on February 23, 1821, John Keats died in his twenty-sixth year. He was buried in the Protestant Cemetery at Rome; not far away repose the ashes of Shelley.

His Personality.—According to the testimony of his many friends, John Keats was an uncommonly lovable man. His manliness is the first characteristic that impresses one in reading his own letters as well as the letters about him from those who knew him well. Courage, frankness, artistic sensitiveness shine in his open face and large bright eyes. His friend Haydon speaks of Keats's "eager, inspired look," when poetry was the subject of talk; other friends bear tribute to his humor, good temper, and generosity. We may put Keats along with Wordsworth as a man of blameless life and noble ideals. In the dark days before his death, he had wished his epitaph to be, "Here lies one whose name was writ in water"; but in healthier moments he had said, "I think I shall be among the English poets after my death." Extremely sensitive, battling against disease, and deeply in love, with no prospect of realizing his dream of happiness, Keats presents a pathetic and tragic picture; his youth, his genius, his nobleness, his lofty aims, and his early death, make him one of the most interesting figures in our literature. Not less remarkable than his delicate poetic genius is his solidity of character: "The thing to be seized is," says Matthew Arnold, "that Keats had flint and iron in him, that he had character."

The Poetry of Keats.—The first slender volume of Keats's poems appeared in 1817, the last in 1820; and yet in these few years, he did enough to insure him a place among the great poets

of Engiand. One immortal sonnet, inspired by reading Chapman's translation of Homer, and beginning,

Much have I travelled in the realms of gold;

Endymion, an immature poem of luxuriant beauty; the fragment *Hyperion,* the poems, "Isabella," "Lamia," "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "Eve of St. Agnes," and the exquisite odes, "To a Nightingale" and "On a Grecian Urn": this is the principal work of Keats. For rapid development, considering the high quality of these poems, it would be hard to find a parallel among our poets. It makes one pause to conjecture what might have been, had not fate "slit the thin-spun life" so soon.

The inspiration of Keats's verse is Greek mythology and mediaeval romance, while to Spenser and the other Elizabethans he owed much. In that antique world of fair forms and haunting melodies he lived: Clarke said that "he ramped through *The Faerie Queene* like a young horse turned into a spring meadow." Unlike Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, and Shelley, he cared nothing for the French Revolution and the great social, political, and religious tumult of the time. He sat apart absorbed in the worship of pure beauty. Shelley was a reformer, eagerly singing about human perfectibility and passionately proclaiming a Golden Age. "O for a life of sensations rather than of thoughts!" exclaimed Keats. In his love for form, the plastic side, Keats is Greek; in his love for color, the pictorial side, he is mediaeval and Elizabethan: in him the sensuous element of Romanticism finds its purest expression.

The poetic creed of Keats may be summed up in a few well-known lines—one from *Endymion,*

A thing of beauty is a joy forever,—

and the others from the "Ode on a Grecian Urn,"

Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.

To these poetic utterances may be added Keats's remark in a letter to his brother George: "With a great poet the sense of beauty overcomes every other consideration, or rather obliterates all consideration." He loved beauty in the abstract simply for beauty's sake, without a thought of making beauty serve any human or divine purpose. He did not, therefore, agree with Wordsworth that the poet should be a teacher; he should be pre-eminently an interpreter of beauty, according to Keats. He and Shelley are alike chiefly in their love for ideal beauty; beyond that, likeness ceases. Keats's poetry is consequently without spiritual and moral ardor; but it is full of rich, luxurious charm that takes the senses captive. Take two poems by way of illustration, "The Eve of St. Agnes" and "Ode to a Nightingale." These poems abound in magic words and phrases that act upon the senses like opiates or elixirs: you feel the cold that benumbs the old beadsman or the drowsiness that overcomes the maiden "in the poppied warmth of sleep," and taste the sweet things in this almost sticky stanza:

> And still she slept an azure-lidded sleep,
> In blanched linen, smooth and lavendered,
> While he from forth the closet brought a heap
> Of candied apple, quince, and plum, and gourd;
> With jellies soother than the creamy curd,
> And lucent syrops tinct with cinnamon;
> Manna and dates, in argosy transferred
> From Fez; and spiced dainties, every one,
> From silken Samarcand to cedared Lebanon.

Speaking of the nightingale, Keats says that its song may have long ago charmed

> The sad heart of Ruth, when sick for home,
> She stood in tears amid the alien corn;

and then goes on to speak of it as

> The same that oft-times hath
> Charmed magic casements, opening on the foam
> Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn.

The words "alien," "magic," "perilous," "forlorn," as here used, illustrate Keats's verbal felicity. He is a master in the use of the magic word. No other poet has a more exquisite sensitiveness to sound and color. Through this faculty he is a precursor of Rossetti and Swinburne, and links the Elizabethans with the Pre-Raphaelites.

MINOR ROMANTIC POETS

Robert Southey (1774–1843).—Robert Southey, one of the so-called "Lake Poets," friend and associate of Coleridge and Wordsworth, spent most of his long life at Greta Hall in the Lake District, to which place he went in 1803. He was born in Bristol, the son of a merchant, educated at Westminster School and at Oxford. He planned with Coleridge the dream of an ideal community, Pantisocracy, on the Susquehanna, already mentioned; later studied law, but found it uncongenial; visited Spain and Portugal; and finally, after losing his early interest in revolutionary ideals, made his permanent home near Keswick. Here for nearly forty years he wrote voluminously in verse and prose, and collected, meanwhile, one of the largest private libraries in England.

Among Southey's numerous works in verse may be mentioned *Thalaba*, *The Curse of Kehama*, and *Roderick, Last of the Goths*. The first two are oriental stories wrought into readable, but uninspired verse, the result of wide reading and great industry; the third is a romantic tale of the last king of the Goths, who defends his kingdom against the invading Arabs. These metrical romances contain patches of brilliant description, and *Roderick*, in particular, is a rapid piece of narration in which there are passages full of fire and color, due in part to the fact that Southey had visited the legendary scenes in Spain. These poems are little read to-day because of their length and lack of high poetic merit. Southey was made Poet Laureate in 1813, and some years later wrote a fulsome work, *The Vision of Judgment*, narrating the celestial adventures of George III, which provoked Byron's brilliant and withering

satire of the same name. The short poems, "Battle of Blenheim" and "Lodore," are still popular. Southey has proved to be far greater as a writer of prose than as a poet; his admirable *Life of Nelson* is one of the best biographies in our language.

Thomas Moore (1779–1852).—Thomas Moore, friend of Emmet and of Byron, melodious singer, and versatile man of the world, was born in Dublin, educated at Trinity College, Dublin University, and studied law in London. His lilting adaptation of the *Odes of Anacreon*, the Greek lyric poet, made at fifteen and published in 1800, brought him into public favor. The next year his *Poems by Little* made the young Irish poet still more popular; but not until the appearance of the *Irish Melodies* (1807), continued off and on for many years, did he reach the height of his reputation. Meanwhile he had received a government appointment to the Bermudas; after staying a short time in the islands, and then visiting the United States, he returned to England, leaving the duties of his office in the hands of a deputy. Later (1818) this deputy, through dishonest administration, caused the poet a great financial loss. His longest poem, *Lalla Rookh*, a gorgeous oriental romance, appeared in 1817, and was exceedingly popular. The next year he published his greatest satire, *The Fudge Family in Paris*, taking off with telling effect the typical Englishman abroad. After traveling on the continent, visiting Byron in Italy, and spending a year or two in Paris, Moore returned to England and gave himself very largely to the writing of biography until his death in 1852.

The fame of Moore rests to-day upon certain of his *Irish Melodies*, *Lalla Rookh*,—less read than formerly,—and his *Life and Letters of Lord Byron*, an interesting work and for a long time the standard biography. Moore was a brilliant conversationalist, an accomplished musician, and otherwise socially gifted. His charming personality and accomplishments made him a welcome guest in the highest social circles. His verse is polished and sweet, graceful, witty, and tender, but somewhat artificial and suggestive of the lights and glitter of the drawing-room. Pleasing as is "The Last Rose of Summer," it is unquestionably lacking in the spon-

taneous simplicity of one of Burns's songs,—"Highland Mary," for instance.

Campbell and Rogers.—Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), Scotch poet, wrote at the age of twenty-one a long work in rhyming couplets called *The Pleasures of Hope*, revealing in its simple lines and pleasing descriptions a noble enthusiasm for liberty; for Campbell, like the rest of the young dreamers of the day, was at first deeply interested in the French Revolution. Later, he wrote *Gertrude of Wyoming*, a romantic story of less poetic vigor than *The Pleasures of Hope*. Campbell's shorter poems, rather than the longer, entitle him to lasting remembrance, such as "The Battle of the Baltic" and "Ye Mariners of England," patriotic ballads throbbing with the Briton's passion for liberty.

Samuel Rogers (1763–1855), a London banker of literary tastes and a patron of art and man of letters, wrote a long poem called *The Pleasures of Memory*, abounding in finished and descriptive passages and cultured allusions, and a metrical account of his travels entitled *Italy* which has been called a "kind of pedestrian *Childe Harold*." He had Romantic sensibilities without a rich imagination, and his verse is tedious reading to-day. Rogers was an accomplished host and his "literary breakfasts" were long a feature in London social life. He brought together at these little functions celebrated English men of letters, and, like Mæcenas of old, presided with dignity and grace.

THE NOVELISTS

Romanticism in Prose Fiction.—The work of the first English novelists—Richardson, Fielding, Sterne, Smollett—has already been considered. These writers, it will be remembered, depicted the life of their time in a realistic way, though Richardson and Sterne injected into their portrayals more of sentiment than the other two. Moreover the novels of Fanny Burney were described as transcripts of contemporary manners, or society novels, and the one novel by Goldsmith, *The Vicar of Wakefield*, is a domestic novel. Broadly speaking, all these works are realistic novels,—

that is, they depict life very much as it is, or as it might be without violating our sense of probability. With the rise of Romanticism in the latter half of the eighteenth century, however, the novel shows the influence of the new movement just as poetry had begun to do. Thus, we see in the development of the novel two well-defined tendencies, one realistic, the other romantic; and, from that day to this, these two tendencies—Realism and Idealism—are found side by side or mingling throughout the history of the novel.

There appeared in the year 1764 a story by HORACE WALPOLE, *The Castle of Otranto*, grotesquely unreal, but nevertheless worth remembering because it marks the beginning of what is known as the "Gothic Romance." "Gothic" as here used means wild, weird, picturesque, and is usually associated with awe-inspiring mountain scenery, haunted castles and ruins, subterranean passages and ghostly visitants; it is the opposite of the classic and conventional. Walpole, who had built a so-called Gothic castle at Strawberry Hill on the Thames, conceived a romance with scenes laid in the Italy of the twelfth or thirteenth century. There are dark towers, trapdoors, damp underground passages, large upper rooms with ancestral portraits that descend from the walls uttering deep groans, and a giant in armor that shakes himself and scares the servants almost to death. *The Castle of Otranto* is the crude forerunner of a number of such romances.

The greatest of the writers of Gothic romances (tales of mystery revived with greater artistic effect in the short stories of Poe and Hawthorne) is ANNE RADCLIFFE (1764–1823), whose *Mysteries of Udolpho* (1794) used to make her readers feel "creepy" on dark, stormy nights. The scene is laid in a mouldy, half-ruined castle in the Alps; the heroine, left alone in one of the big chambers, hears on wild nights when the wind rocks the battlements, strange shrieks and in the lightning flashes sees ghostly forms gliding about. Creaking doors and dim blood-stains and rustling curtains fill her with terror. Mechanical as is much of the mystification in these stories, Mrs. Radcliffe is not without power in her pleasing descriptions of mountain, forest, and sea,

under the glow of sunset and the deepening gloom of twilight. She is akin to Byron in her ability to invest mountain and sea with grandeur.

The romances of the time fall into three divisions: the Gothic, the Oriental, and the Historical.[1] The historical romance is, of course, the most important of the three and comes to perfection in Walter Scott. Meanwhile, the realistic novel of social life, begun by Fanny Burney, is carried on with moral purpose by Maria Edgeworth and with greater art as a minute study of local manners by Jane Austen.

Maria Edgeworth (1767–1849).—Maria Edgeworth spent much of her life in the heart of Ireland, and out of her study of social and economic conditions there her best stories grew. The most important of her Irish stories are *Castle Rackrent*, *The Absentee*, and *Ennui*. *Castle Rackrent* (1800) is an entertaining portrayal of social conditions in Ireland based on direct observation. Appreciating the humorous element in the Irish character as fully as she pitied the poverty and oppression of Ireland, Miss Edgeworth succeeded in depicting the real Irishman with such refreshing originality that for the next fifty years writers of Irish stories sprang up over England in great numbers. Though her later work popularized the society novel, she is still more famous as "the creator of the international novel." What is even more important, perhaps, is her unconscious influence upon Sir Walter Scott, who, impressed with Miss Edgeworth's delineation of Irish character, conceived the idea of rendering a like service to Scotland.

JANE AUSTEN (1775–1817)

Her Life.—Jane Austen, after George Eliot the greatest woman novelist in English literature, was the daughter of a clergyman at the village of Steventon in Hampshire, southern England. Here the first three of her novels were written. She was educated at home along with her sisters,

[1] In so brief a work as this a multitude of romances of the later eighteenth century must be passed over. *Caleb Williams* (1794) by William Godwin, Shelley's father-in-law, is a typical revolutionary novel, setting forth with didactic purpose certain socialistic theories.

but more thoroughly than most girls of the time. In her reading she was fond of Richardson, Cowper, and Crabbe—all minute observers of nature,—but she did not like Mrs. Radcliffe and the other Gothic romancers. Jane Austen's life is an uneventful one: her novels were written in the midst of household duties so quietly that few of her acquaintances were aware that she was an author. When a publisher was at last found (several had refused the manuscripts), the writer's name was not made public; it did not appear on her works, indeed, until after her death, though the identity of the author was known to many. She wrote neither for fame nor for money. The latter part of her life was spent in other parts of her native county and at Bath, the fashionable watering-place. At these places—Bath, Southampton, Chawton—her last novels were written. Jane Austen died in 1817 at Winchester and was buried in the great cathedral there.

Her Works.—Jane Austen wrote six novels: *Pride and Prejudice* (1796-1797), *Sense and Sensibility* (1797), *Northanger Abbey* (1798), *Emma, Mansfield Park, Persuasion,*—the last three, written after 1801, forming the second group. She did not go out of her own experience for scenes and characters, confining herself in the choice of material to the little region of south England and its country aristocracy and upper middle class society which she knew so well. Out of the sayings and doings, the social ambitions, the visits and excursions, of a neighborhood she constructs a delightful comedy of manners in the better language of everyday life. She scatters her characters, brings them together in pairs, groups them at balls or at dinner parties, all in a very natural manner. Her novels consequently produce the illusion of real life. In one of her letters Jane Austen wrote: "Three or four families in a country village is the very thing to work on." This, in a nutshell, is her material, upon which she works with almost microscopic art. Her style is clear and flowing, relieved from monotony by a gentle irony which gives piquancy to conversation and an air of high-bred refinement to her characters. Her active imagination lends color and movement to the plot, which now and then grows tense in a dramatic situation. Only one of her novels, *Northanger Abbey,* is a manifest satire; in this story she burlesques the Gothic romance of the Radcliffe type with great success.

Jane Austen is a realist. She does what Fielding did, but with more fidelity to daily life and with less comic effect. She wrote

with no ulterior purpose, but just for the joy of the working, and is "one of the sincerest examples in our literature of art for art's sake."[1] Her novels were not duly appreciated in her own lifetime, but have been gaining in popular favor ever since, and to-day Jane Austen ranks as a standard novelist, the only one, indeed, of this period worthy to be classed with Sir Walter Scott. Scott himself once said of her: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements of feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with." Those who like accurate delineation of cheerful, homely scenes, depicted by a keen observer of social whims and character-contrasts and not without a delicate humor, will find Jane Austen's novels refreshing reading in our time of overburdened "purpose novels." *Pride and Prejudice* is generally regarded as her masterpiece.

SIR WALTER SCOTT (1771-1832)

His Life.—Walter Scott, greatest of historical novelists, poet and antiquarian, was born in Edinburgh, in 1771, the son of a lawyer and decendant of famous Border chieftains. Edinburgh is the center of a region romantic in song and story; the old city itself is one of the most picturesque in situation and tradition of the cities of the world. A severe fever left Scott weak and lame at eighteen months of age, and about a year later he was sent for an outdoor life to his grandfather's at Sandy-Knowe on the Tweed. Here he remained several years, riding, walking, exploring hills and valleys, and listening to the country people as they told stories of border warfare or sang scraps of old ballads. This was the beginning of his education in romance which later was to blossom so splendidly in his own poems and novels. At seven Scott entered the grammar school at Edinburgh, passing to the high school, and in 1785 to the University of Edinburgh. At school he was a voracious reader of history, ballads, and romances; and was known among the boys as a story-teller with an inexhaustible stock of out-of-the-way knowledge. In order to read mediaeval romances in the original languages, he studied French and Italian, and he left school with a fairly good knowledge of Latin. When he was thirteen Percy's *Reliques of Ancient Poetry*, the collection of Scotch and English ballads already mentioned, fell into his hands and was read with eager delight.

Scott, who had been reading law with his father during his years at the

[1] Cross: *The Development of the English Novel*, p. 115.

University, was admitted to practice in 1792, though he never greatly cared for legal proceedings; he was, however, a good lawyer and on occasion could put his training to practical use. After his marriage in 1797, he moved to Lasswade near Edinburgh, and upon his appointment as Sheriff of Selkirk in 1799 made his residence at Ashestiel on the Tweed. Later, about 1812, he became clerk of the Court of Session with a good salary. That same year he moved to Abbotsford, five miles below Ashestiel, and here with the ruins of Melrose and Dryburgh not far away, he spent the rest of his life. Abbotsford he built himself in imitation of a feudal castle. Meanwhile he

ABBOTSFORD

had even as early as 1796 translated some German romantic poetry, and published in 1806 his *Border Minstrelsy*, forming this same year a partnership with the Ballantynes, a publishing house in Edinburgh. By 1812 Scott had written his greatest poetry.

The second period of Scott's life, 1814 to 1826, begins with the publication of his first novel, *Waverley*. In the twelve years from 1814 to 1826, Scott had won a reputation and a popularity which it is given to few men to attain. Royal recognition of his genius came in 1820 with the bestowal of a baronetcy by George IV: he was now Sir Walter. His long series of novels brought him in a large fortune; his income from his writings alone was over $50,000 a year.

At the height of this prosperity, in 1826, the crash came, and the third

period, one of pathetic and strenuous activity, begins. That year the publishing house in Edinburgh, of which he had long been a silent partner, failed through general mismanagement, and Scott, who was in no wise responsible for the failure, found himself liable for £117,000 ($585,000) of the debt. He was fifty-five and Lady Scott had just died. With heroic cheerfulness he set himself the task of writing off the debt, and after putting Abbotsford into the hands of trustees, went to work with right good will. He took lodgings in Edinburgh and all alone began the herculean labor. With unremitting diligence he worked until 1830, when a stroke of paralysis warned him to rest.

In 1831 he went on a trip to Italy to recuperate. But it was too late; the end was coming, and he wanted to die at Abbotsford. Hither they brought the worn-out hero and here, surrounded by his kin, his faithful servants, and his favorite dogs, Sir Walter died on September 21, 1832. A few days later he was buried in Dryburgh Abbey among his ancestors. Not long before his death he called Lockhart, his son-in-law, to his bedside and said: "My dear, be a good man,—be virtuous,—be religious,—be a good man. Nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here." In two years Scott had paid off £40,000 ($200,000) of the debt; the sale of new editions of his works still further reduced it before he died, and after his death every penny of the debt was finally paid out of the proceeds of his works.

His Personality.—Sir Walter Scott was a big hearted, wholesome, manly man, radiating good cheer and moral soundness; well-balanced, with practical sense and romantic imagination in happy equilibrium,—the most symmetrical of the writers of his time, untouched by morbidness or eccentricity. His canny shrewdness and humor and his kindly heart endeared him to his uncultured retainers and neighbors, who were very proud of "Sir Walter"; his patriotic love of his native hills made him write and speak of Scotland with the chivalric enthusiasm of a mediaeval knight for his lady. He was a prodigious worker: one day near the end of his life he wrote copy which made sixty pages of print. Along with these qualities went great courage as well as great reticence; anything like sentimental gush he disliked; he did not make a display of his deeper feelings. He was the soul of honor. When fortune frowned upon him, he smilingly said: "Give me my popularity, and all my present difficulties shall be a joke in four years." There is no sublimer spectacle in the long

years (1814–1831), with an average of almost two a year—an astonishing performance when it is remembered how many official and social engagements demanded the author's attention during those years. Scott had written a part of *Waverley* some years before 1814 and laid the manuscript aside; he came across it one day when looking for his fishing tackle, and setting to work finished it in three weeks. This will serve to illustrate his rapidity of composition. The success of the venture encouraged him to write other stories of Scotch life and manners, and then to try English and continental scenes.

Scott's novels fall naturally into three groups:—those on Scottish history, nine in all, such as *Waverley, Guy Mannering, Rob Roy,* and *The Heart of Midlothian*; those on English history, such as *Ivanhoe, Kenilworth, Woodstock*; those concerned with scenes on the continent, chiefly French, and in the Orient, such as *Count Robert of Paris, Quentin Durward,* and *The Talisman.* Until 1819 Scott busied himself with Scottish life and character, but in that year he published *Ivanhoe,* the first, and in many respects the greatest, of his romantic studies of English history. *Ivanhoe* is essentially a romance,—that is, the interest is in the adventures, the incidents, which, though realistically treated, are not reflections of ordinary life; *The Heart of Midlothian,* on the other hand, is essentially a novel, a picture of homely Scotch life. *Ivanhoe* probably continues to be the most popular of Scott's novels and will repay careful plot-analysis, but *The Heart of Midlothian* is the most powerful of them in intense realism and character interest.

The boy or girl who reads Scott's novels makes the acquaintance of characters and scenes which will enrich the imagination through life. There is not a nobler picture gallery in our prose literature than this; it is next in variety and human interest to Shakespeare's gallery of immortals. These men and women of Scott, while not "true to history," are generally true to the fundamental qualities of human life, just as Shakespeare's characters are. His distinctive merit is that he peoples his books with folk whom we recognize as human. He did know a great deal about history,

especially Scottish history and legend, and is able to give his novels the coloring of past ages—"the pomp and circumstance of war,"—but his power to create character is greater than his power to reproduce history. By putting interesting and plausible characters into old chronicles, he made the dry bones take on flesh and act like modern people, and the history part becomes alive to us through them. Upon the whole, Scott is more successful when he is depicting that homely Scotch character which he loved and knew directly; his men are, as a rule, more convincing than his women, except when the latter are Scotch women living close to his own time or kin to border chieftains and the like; his aristocratic maidens, like Rowena, are generally pale and conventional.

Naturally reticent on matters of sentiment, Sir Walter is not notably successful with his love scenes. When the knight and the lady get together for the exchange of tender vows, Scott, as somebody has remarked, is a little nervous and gets through with the affair quickly or takes the reader elsewhere, leaving the lovers to themselves. What business has an outsider there anyhow? In his novels, as in his poems, he is objective: he tells his story, but he holds no brief for social, political, or religious reform, neither does he tackle any problems. In spite of such limitations as the modern mind may find in his work, his novels, when all has been said, are varied and vital records of a creative power that is nothing short of colossal.

Scott's Contributions.—The distinctive contributions of Sir Walter Scott are these: (1) The making of a new Scotland out of the old. Since his day Scotland has taken on a fresh interest for student and artist and traveler. With his enchanter's wand this "Wizard of the North" evoked from the musty past a land of romance. (2) A quickened impulse to historical study. Scott vitalized history and taught others how to write it with greater regard for the human element. He helped to socialize facts. (3) An enlargement of the scope of fiction. All sorts of characters and a variety of nationalities appear in his novels, covering six or seven centuries of the epic or heroic side of legend and history.

The range of Scott's novels is the greatest in our literature of fiction. (4) The creation of the historical novel. Attempts at writing this species of prose fiction before Scott—as, for example, in Jane Porter's *Scottish Chiefs*—are pale and ineffectual. Following him there arose a host of writers of historical romances. "From Scott nearly all the successful historical novelists since his time have learned their craft."[1] (5) Harmony between background, action, and character. This is called "local color." For the first time in the history of the novel the setting became an integral and indispensable part of the story.

THE ESSAYISTS AND CRITICS

Rise of Magazine Literature.—During the first quarter of the nineteenth century the modern magazine was founded and from that day to this has proved an important factor in English literature. The *Edinburgh Review* was established in 1802, the *Quarterly* in 1809, *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1817; following these were the *Westminster Review*, the *London Magazine*, *Fraser's Magazine*, and others. The reviewing of new books was the regular occupation of the originators of the earlier periodicals, while a little later, contributions in the form of literary essays formed the staple of the magazines. Thus literary criticism became an established art.

The most celebrated of the reviewers was Francis Jeffrey (1778–1850), originator and for years editor of the *Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey was by nature a conservative, steadfastly opposed to the romanticists, and along with Gifford, editor of the *Quarterly*, reviewed the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge in a tone of caustic irony, and that of Keats with bitter ridicule. These critics belonged to the old school which followed Pope and the "classic rules," and though intellectually clever, they were incapable of reading the signs of the times which indicated the triumph of a newer order of poetry. Among the editors of the day were

[1]Cross: *Development of the English Novel*, p. 134.

Scott's son-in-law, John Gibson Lockhart (1794–1854), now remembered by his delightful *Life of Scott*, one of the best biographies in our literature, and by his interesting *Life of Burns*; and John Wilson (1785–1854) ("Christopher North"), author of *Noctes Ambrosianae*, charming reminiscences of his literary friends, among whom were Wordsworth and De Quincey. The magazines, under the direction of men of taste and critical ability, soon came to have a decided influence on literature. All the great essayists wrote for them, and, as we shall see a little later, some of the standard novels first appeared as serials in magazines.

The New Appreciative Criticism.—Up to this time literary criticism in England had been more or less dominated by the "classic rules" or by dogmatic personal opinions. Whenever the dictates of common sense, colored by the enthusiasm of individual preference, prevailed,—as, for instance, in the critical essays of Dryden, or in certain of Addison and Johnson,—the reader would get a clearer understanding of the man and work discussed. For the most part, however, critics went on pronouncing a poet or prose writer "guilty" if he did not observe certain laws which, in the critic's opinion, were infallible because established by the ancients or fixed by custom. This was Pope's method, and to a less degree, Johnson's and Jeffrey's. These critics, with all their mental acuteness, did not, as a rule, study a poem from the inside by patiently trying to find out what the author himself had attempted to do. Now the key which unlocks the door to an author's work is sympathy. "Not to sympathize is not to understand," said De Quincey, and in that dictum he implies the cardinal principle of the new appreciative criticism which began about this time. That is the modern method of criticism: a sympathetic study of a piece of literature for the purpose of getting the writer's point of view, and in the light of his intention to estimate his performance. The leaders in this appreciative or sympathetic criticism—which is a part of the prose literature of Romanticism—are Lamb, De Quincey, Coleridge, Hazlitt, and Hunt.

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834)

His Life.—Charles Lamb, essayist and letter writer, spent his life of almost sixty years in and about London. He was born in 1775 in the precincts of the Temple—that rambling old building of lawyers' offices and lodgings,—the son of John Lamb, a lawyer's clerk in the Middle Temple, whose characteristics are set forth in one of his son's essays. Charles was sent at seven years of age to Christ's Hospital School through the influence of his father's employer, and there he met Coleridge and Leigh Hunt. Here Lamb remained for seven years, aquiring a good knowledge of Latin and less of Greek and reading such old English authors as he could get his hands on. From school he went at fourteen to become a clerk in the South Sea House, as it was necessary for him to help support the family. A few years later, in 1792, he was given a clerkship in the East India House,—the London headquarters of a great trading company—and in that position of daily grind Lamb spent the next thirty-three years.

In 1796 a tragedy befell the Lamb family, which darkened their lives for years. Charles's sister Mary, ten years his senior, to whom he was deeply attached, killed her mother in a fit of insanity. This dread malady was inherited, as Charles himself at one time suffered a brief attack. Mary was confined in a hospital for the insane, and under skilful treatment she recovered; but the rest of her long life she was subject to attacks of madness. The father was old and childish; for him and the afflicted sister Charles Lamb tenderly cared, devoting himself uncomplainingly to their comfort. Still the household was not a gloomy one: Lamb's genial humor enlivened the little circle, and Mary herself was a congenial companion; Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, and other friends were frequent visitors, and many were the rare evenings of high talk they had together. Meanwhile, Lamb had written some poetry, and gradually entered upon his vocation of authorship, giving out from time to time his chatty essays. Then he and his sister, as the result of reading in the Elizabethan dramatists, wrote together the *Tales from Shakespeare,* and Lamb published with comments selections from the dramatists. His writings brought him public recognition and some money, though essays of such delicate flavor never appeal to a very large circle.

In 1825 Lamb's employers at the East India House granted him a pension or £441 ($2,200) a year for his long and faithful service, and he retired. Used to a daily routine of clerical work, he really missed his uncongenial task and found himself sometimes wandering back to the desk; his humorous account of his feelings may be found in the *Elia* sketch, "The Superannuated Man." These later years, saddened by Mary's malady and Charles's failing health, were spent at Enfield and Edmonton near London. The end came

in 1834, and Lamb was buried in the churchyard at Edmonton. Mary Lamb survived her brother thirteen years.

His Personality.—To know Lamb the man one must read his essays and letters, for his lovable personality is gently diffused throughout his writings. Next to these one should read what his friends say about him, such as Leigh Hunt, Barry Cornwall, Hazlitt, Crabbe, Robinson. Few men have had warmer friends, and about few men has a string of more delightful anecdotes come down to us.[1] Lamb declared that he "herded always, while it was possible, with younger people than himself. * * * * The impressions of infancy had burnt into him, and he resented the impertinence of manhood." His habit of stuttering gave his talk, bright and whimsically humorous when he was at his best, a touch of drollery. Coleridge, whose long monologues sometimes wearied his hearers, once said to Lamb: "Charles, I think you have heard me preach?" "I n-n-never heard you do anything else," answered Lamb. It was Coleridge whom Lamb once called "an archangel slightly damaged." Naturally sensitive and shy, he was at his ease only in the congenial company of friends. No doubt there was a suggestion of quaintness about Lamb's appearance as there is about his writings and literary likings: he was fond of old-fashioned styles in dress and of old books and old china; when a new book came out he said he read an old one. His playful humor is often touched with gentle pathos. That was the man's life—an alternation of sunshine and shadow; something of the child, much of the philosopher.

His Works.—Lamb's first writings were poems and plays, but he was really neither a poet nor a dramatist, and the only poem of his still widely read is "The Old Familiar Faces," which is full of tender sentiment. In 1807, the *Tales from Shakespeare* appeared, the stories of Shakespeare's plays told in simple, pleasing style. It is the joint work of Charles and Mary Lamb: he undertook the tragedies and she the comedies, a fitting and considerate

[1] See the *Life of Charles Lamb*, by E. V. Lucas, for a rich collection of these anecdotes.

division in view of Mary Lamb's tendency to melancholy. The next year Lamb published *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets Contemporary with Shakespeare*, which gave him wide reputation as a literary critic. He was a lover of the Elizabethan drama, having read it for years with sympathetic delight and discriminating insight. The selection of "purple patches" is the most satisfactory yet made, though our taste of to-day leads us to prefer whole plays in a collection rather than excerpts. Not, however, until the appearance of his *Essays of Elia*[1] in the *London Magazine*, beginning in 1820, did Lamb find his true vein.

The *Essays of Elia* came out one a month for several years, and were then collected in a volume. They are essays of the personal type, informal, rambling, chatty, on a variety of subjects rather whimsically chosen. A few of these well-known papers are: "A Dissertation upon Roast Pig," "The Praise of Chimney-sweepers," "Old China," "The South Sea House," "Christ's Hospital Five-and-Thirty Years Ago," "My Relations," "A Chapter on Ears," "All-Fools' Day," "Dream Children," "The Superannuated Man." Some of them are quite personal: Lamb's own experiences, though limited to London, were rich in material for his delicate imagination and playful humor; and besides, he was deeply read in the older prose like Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* and Brown's *Religio Medici* and *Urn Burial*, to say nothing of the Elizabethan dramatists—works of mellow style and antique flavor. Moreover, Lamb knew London street-life as no one else since Johnson, and he loved it as did the old Fleet-street autocrat, but with a keener eye for oddities of character. Then, too,—and here the social aspect of Johnson's day is suggested,—Lamb was part of a large fellowship of literary men, some of whom were just respectable Bohemians.

These loose, familiar essays are both like and unlike the *Tatler* and *Spectator* papers of Steele and Addison a hundred years before. Lamb's humor, quaintly delicate and delicious, is more subtly

[1] *Elia* was the name of a clerk in the South Sea House, adopted in jest by Lamb.

pervasive than the somewhat formal fun of Addison and the joviality of Steele. There is neither irony nor cynicism in Lamb, but there is what Hazlitt called "witty melancholy." We see things through the eyes of this gentle talker and inwardly laugh at the play of his old-fashioned fancy. Hardly less fascinating are *Lamb's Letters*, informal outpourings of his opinions on people, books, and things in general, but none so interesting as the writer himself. Critic, essayist, letter writer; perfecter of the personal essay begun by Steele and Addison; portrayer of the inner life and interpreter of moods,—such is Charles Lamb, the "gentle Elia," whose delightful essays should be read for pure pleasure with sympathies all alive.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY (1775-1859)

His Life.—Thomas De Quincey, dreamer and critic, friend of Charles Lamb and associate of the "Lake Poets," was born in Manchester in 1775, the son of a merchant. Shortly after his birth the family moved into the country, and in 1791 to Greenhay; De Quincey's boyhood was thus spent amid rural scenes, where his shy, imaginative temperament was stimulated by lonely reveries. After attending a local school for a while, he was sent to Bath Grammar School. Here he was a brilliant student, showing wonderful proficiency in Greek especially. "At thirteen," he says in the *Confessions of an Opium-Eater*, "I wrote Greek with ease, and at fifteen my command of that language was so great, that I not only composed Greek verses in lyric metres, but would converse in Greek fluently, and without embarrassment * * * * 'That boy' said one of my masters, * * * * 'could harangue an Athenian mob better than you or I could address an English one.'"

After a trip to Ireland, De Quincey was sent to the Manchester Grammar School: but having conceived a violent dislike for the school, he determined to escape from the tyranny of the teachers and the brutality of the boys, which he had endured for a year. He accordingly ran away to Wales where for months he rambled about, sleeping out of doors, managing to live on a small allowance from his mother. From Wales he went to London, and there he led that strange Bohemian life so vividly related in the *Confessions*.

This vagabond experience in the streets of London, where he wandered at will and dreamed, came later to be regarded by De Quincey as a sort of initiation into the mysteries of human sorrow about which he afterward wrote in a spirit of solemn exaltation. By this time, 1803, his friends and relatives decided to send him to Oxford. There he entered Worcester

College, and soon was known as "a quiet and studious man." At Oxford De Quincey became addicted to the opium habit, which was the cause of both joy and sorrow, fame and failure. The drug was at first taken to relieve neuralgia; the habit gradually grew upon him until at the end of ten years he was taking daily from eight to twelve thousand drops of laudanum. Happily, by a steady reduction of the amount he finally succeeded in almost freeing himself from the use of the drug. Leaving the University in 1808, he journeyed to the Lake District. Here he met the Wordsworths, and the next year, 1809, moved into Dove Cottage at Grasmere, succeeding Wordsworth, and spent many years there.

De Quincey's Grasmere period extended from 1809 to 1830. During this time, however, he spent three or four years in London, where he began his career as an author by contributing to the magazines. For the next thirty years he turned out a great variety of literature, writing more steadily for the magazines than any other man of his time not editorially connected with them. He married in 1816. During these years he made the acquaintance of every literary man worth knowing in England and Scotland. In 1830 he moved with his family to Edinburgh. His wife died in 1837, and De Quincey was left in charge of his small children, his two older sons having died several years before. He was never able to keep money, spending it lavishly or giving it away to friends or beggars. Without practical ability, he would with the utmost gentleness do the most surprising things. For instance, he was at one time paying rent for four or five different lodgings in Edinburgh: as his manuscripts and books accumulated in one house, he would, rather than disturb them, go out and rent other quarters, stay until they likewise filled up with books and papers, then move to others, and so on. In 1840 the family rented a cottage at Lasswade, near Edinburgh, and there De Quincey spent the rest of his life, except the last few years when he had lodgings in the city. He died in 1859 and was buried in the West Churchyard, Edinburgh.

His Personality.—Carlyle's vivid description of De Quincey is well-known: "You would have taken him, by candlelight, for the beautifullest little child; blue-eyed, blonde-haired, sparkling face—had there not been something, too, which said 'Eccovi, this Child has been in Hell.' " Shy and fond of solitude, he was a great walker, and while he lived at Grasmere might be seen at any hour of the night flitting about over the hills, ghostlike, as the neighbors thought. And this shy and absent-minded man, once started, was a great and entertaining talker in the cultured circles of London and Edinburgh, and also a good listener, which

Coleridge was not. De Quincey was noted for his absent-mindedness: he forgot his engagements, set things on fire with his misplaced candle, or singed his own hair over the lamp; then calmly extinguished his burning locks by rubbing his hands over them without interrupting his reading. If you would get him to keep an appointment you must send for him. "He would promise," says Masson,—"promise most punctually, * * * * and reassure you with a dissertation on the beauty of punctuality; but when the time came and you were all met, a hundred to one you were without your De Quincey." Dreamer as he was and for so much of the time lost in rapt reverie, he had a keen sense of humor, while the pathetic experiences of his own life made him sympathetic. He loved children and wrote beautifully about them; he was generous, resembling Goldsmith in his charity; and he had the will power to break away from an insidious habit, which weakened his powers while it caused him agonies mingled with immortal dreams.

His Works.—De Quincey wrote autobiography, essays, and sketches, voluminous and varied, most of them originally for the magazines. His first work of importance, *Confessions of an Opium-Eater* (1821), is in many respects the most representative. This little book is a record in silvery prose of his childhood, his wanderings, and his sensations when under the influence of opium. The pains of opium as well as the delights are dwelt upon in language of irresistible charm. It must not be assumed, however, that De Quincey's gorgeous word-painting is entirely due to opium-dreams; he was from a child a seer of visions, endowed with a highly sensitized soul, and his imagination, without the stimulus of opium, was gorgeously creative.

The other works of De Quincey most worthy of reading and careful study—for he must be studied if his power is to be felt—are: *Autobiographic Sketches*, an account of his childish emotions and experiences; *Flight of a Tartar Tribe*, one of his best pieces of narrative-writing; *Murder Considered as One of the Fine Arts*, abounding in fantastic humor; *The English Mailcoach*, *Joan of Arc*, *Vision of Sudden Death*, *The Knocking at the Gate in Macbeth*, *Suspiria de Profundis*. The "Dream-fugue," from *The*

English Mailcoach, and "Levana and Our Ladies of Sorrows," from *Suspiria de Profundis,* are among the highest reaches of impassioned musical prose in our language. De Quincey's style is the result of a piling up of long cadenced sentences with the cumulative effect of great billows, but more subtly harmonious, suggestive of solemn cathedral music. He had for grand word-melody a genius unsurpassed in English literature. His more stately, richly modulated prose reminds one of the long periods of Jeremy Taylor, Sir Thomas Browne, and John Milton.

Three characteristics impress one who reads much from De Quincey,—the wide range of his knowledge, his great imaginative power, and his diffuseness. He wrote essays on theology, political economy, logic, German metaphysics, and rhetoric, and he did it well, though they are little read. He was related to Coleridge in his interest in German philosophy and in his remarkable conversational gift on abstract themes, and to Macaulay, his successor, in mental curiosity and range of knowledge. By his poetic imagination he is a thorough Romanticist, as well as through his sympathetic method in literary criticism. He is a critic of remarkable insight, as his reminiscences of the "Lake Poets" and his essay on style prove. His one great fault is diffuseness. He had a discursive mind, and he likes to wander off from the main theme on long excursions, much to the annoyance of the impatient reader. De Quincey lived on into the Victorian Era and is a link between the Romanticists and the Victorians. His long and elaborate essays prepared the way for Macaulay, Carlyle, and Ruskin.

Hazlitt and Hunt.—Among the leaders in the new appreciative criticism along with Lamb and De Quincey were William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt.

William Hazlitt (1778–1830), son of a Unitarian minister at Maidstone, is one of the most accomplished and versatile writers of this period. Art critic, reporter, political and philosophical essayist (greatly influenced by Coleridge), and contributor to the reviews, Hazlitt has left a small library of critical writing. The best of his works are the three courses of lectures—*On the English Poets, On the English Comic Writers, On the Dramati*

Literature of the Age of Queen Elizabeth,—and *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*. His *Tabletalk* is an interesting volume of personal impressions about his contemporaries. He asserted that "a genuine criticism should reflect the colour, the light and shade, and the soul and body of a work." His infirmities of temper led him into frequent quarrels, and his life was neither a happy nor an admirable one; but in the domain of the rambling personal essay, suggestive and impressionistic, rather than exhaustive, he ranks high. He was able to reproduce the flavor of an old book or a past age with singular felicity, and at his best,—for instance, in the essay on "Reading Old Books"—he is altogether delightful.

Leigh Hunt (1784–1859), essayist and poet, was at Christ's Hospital School with Lamb, and with him and most of the other Romantic writers kept up a lifelong friendship. He has already been mentioned in connection with Byron, Shelley, and Keats. Hunt wrote a great deal of poetry, though only one short piece, "Abou Ben Adhem," is generally read now. It is as editor and essayist that Hunt demands a place in a brief history of English literature. He began as editor of the *Examiner*, a weekly paper, in 1808, and was for most of his life connected with some periodical. His contributions to these periodicals contain excellent bits of appreciative criticism,—as, for instance, his *What is Poetry?*—and he did much to popularize standard literature. Both Hunt and Hazlitt were, like the other romanticists, fond of the Elizabethans and helped to revive an interest in "poets dead and gone."

Walter Savage Landor (1775–1864)—One of the most accomplished prose writers of the nineteenth century is Walter Savage Landor, born at Warwick, educated at Rugby and Oxford. His long life was checkered with quarrels, escapades, extravagances, due to his high temper and strong prejudices. He managed to spend a large fortune, and then had to turn to his relatives for aid, his two brothers finally giving him an allowance if he would remain in Italy. Much of his life was spent there, indeed, and he is buried in Florence not far from Mrs. Browning. The Brownings were kind and generous to the old man, whose revolutionary

spirit early manifested itself and continued to burst forth throughout his life.

Landor began his literary career by writing *Gebir*, an extravagantly romantic poem published in 1798. This performance has long ago ceased to interest anybody except the literary specialist. The work of Landor which has kept his name from oblivion is the *Imaginary Conversations* in six volumes. Reacting from Romanticism, Landor went back in imagination to Athens and Rome, and bringing celebrated characters face to face recorded their imaginary conversations. Thus, Diogenes and Plato talk philosophy, Hannibal and Marcellus discuss military tactics, Aspasia writes of her talks with Pericles. Coming down to mediaeval and modern times, Landor reports conversations between Dante and Beatrice, Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn, and other notable personages. He wrote the *Imaginary Conversations* in Italy under the spell of classic history and literature. The style is polished and restrained, and catches from the subject matter something of classic coldness. Landor lived far into the new era now to be considered, and saw the glory of the great Victorians.

GRAVE OF WORDSWORTH

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1798-1837)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. The Poets	Reign of George IV, 1820-30
William Wordsworth (1770-1850): Reflective and Lyric Poetry	
Publication of the Lyrical Ballads, 1798	Reign of William IV, 1830-37
Samuel Taylor Coleridge: Romantic Ballads, Criticisms	
George Gordon Byron: Narrative, Lyric, Dramas, Satires	Union of Ireland with Great Britain, 1800
Publication of Childe Harold, 1812	
Percy Bysshe Shelley: Adonais, Prometheus, etc.	Battle of Trafalgar (Death of Nelson), 1805
John Keats: Endymion, Hyperion, Eve of St. Agnes, Odes	
II. The Novelists	Slave Trade Abolished, 1807
Anne Radcliffe: "Gothic" Romances	War with the United States, 1812-1814
Maria Edgeworth: Novels on Ireland	
Jane Austen: Realistic Novels—Pride and Prejudice, etc.	Battle of Waterloo, 1815
Sir Walter Scott (1771-1832): Poems and twenty-nine novels (three groups)	First Atlantic Steamship, 1819
Publication of Waverley, 1814	
III. The Essayists and Critics	Catholic Emancipation Bill, 1829
Charles Lamb: Essays of Elia	First Railroad, 1830
Thomas DeQuincey (1775-1859): Opium-Eater, Joan of Arc, Tartar Tribe, etc.	Reform Bill (Electoral), 1832
Hazlitt and Hunt	
Walter Savage Landor: Imaginary Conversations	Slavery Abolished, 1833

Triumph of Romanticism; A Great Creative Age; Revolution and Reform.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Hassall's Making of the British Empire, Cheyney's Industrial and Social History of England, Warner's Landmarks of English Industrial History, Macaulay's essay on William Pitt.

Literary.—Beers's English Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century (Holt), Symons' The Romantic Movement in English Poetry, Hancock's The French Revolution and the English Poets (University of Chicago Press), Herford's The Age of Wordsworth (Macmillan), Saintsbury's Nineteenth Century Literature, Lives of principal writers in English Men of Letters Series.

Selections and even complete works of the writers of the period are easily accessible in annotated editions and in "Everyman's Library."

Among critical and appreciative essays on the poets and essayists are: Shairp's Studies in Poetry and Philosophy, M. Arnold's Essays in Criticism (second series), Hutton's Literary Essays, Pater's Appreciations, Lowell's Among My Books, Woodberry's Makers of Literature, Fields' Yesterdays with Authors, Bagehot's Literary Studies, Stephen's Hours in a Library, Dowden's Studies in Literature.

The Cambridge edition of the poets (Houghton) is recommended.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

THE VICTORIAN ERA

1837-1910

The Age of Democracy and Science

The Spread of Democracy, Political and Social.—Victoria came to the throne in 1837; five years before that an important bill, already mentioned, had been passed by Parliament granting to the great middle class the right to vote. This was the beginning of widespread political and social reform, and by 1884 the franchise had been given to the working classes. England had at last become a real democracy and Parliament a thoroughly representative body. Little England had, moreover, become imperial through her great system of colonial federation and her ever-growing commerce with the far East, expanding into the powerful British Empire of to-day. This empire-building had been going on steadily since the middle of the eighteenth century until England, in addition to her North American possessions, came to own India, Australia, and parts of Africa, besides many islands. Along with territorial expansion has gone wonderful internal development, for the welfare and happiness of the middle and working classes has occupied the thought and energies of the nation's greatest statesmen. Various kinds of social reform have been successfully carried out, such as the prevention of child labor in factories, a shorter working day, improved agricultural conditions, better homes for workingmen, sanitation, pure food, and the settlement of disputes by arbitration.

The age has been marked by social unrest following an insistent demand for social justice based on the democratic principle of equal opportunity for all men. It has been a time of complex social and economic problems and experiments, attempts at working

out the visions and dreams of the Age of Romanticism for the practical good of man. The individualism of that period has become socialized, while the somewhat vague idealism of earlier reformers is expressing itself in more concrete ways. The prosperity of the middle classes, the improvement in the mechanical arts, and the growth of commerce, caused during the earlier years of the Victorian Era an absorption in material concerns against which essayists, novelists, and poets cried out in tones of impassioned protest. With the greater ease of living, however, came more leisure for reading and with the growth of modern democracy a remarkable advance in popular education. The union of the ideal and the practical is more strikingly exemplified in this age than in any other period of English literature; and though the Victorians lack the fresh joyousness of the Elizabethans, they have deeper and more varied interests than the men and women of the older time.

Growth of the Scientific Spirit.—Progress in natural science has wrought a change in man's conception of the universe and profoundly influenced literature and history. In the realm of applied science steam and electricity may be said to have changed the face of civilization since 1837, while the new art of aviation opens to the intellectually curious a field of wonder. Railroads, steamships, telegraphs, telephones bind the world together in a great social community, or annihilate space and time; mechanical inventions of endless variety add to the comfort of life and bring increased respect for the ingenuity of the human mind. The scientific imagination is regnant; inventions follow each other so fast that nothing seems impossible in an age crowded with the marvels of discovery.

Still more startling have been the revelations of biology, or the science of life. Darwin's *Origin of Species* appeared in 1859, setting forth the theory of evolution, and since then every department of human thought has felt the influence of this epoch-making book. The intellectual and spiritual unrest which followed unsettled and saddened many to whom the new doctrine of evolution seemed destructive of the older philosophic and religious beliefs.

The readjustment to the new order proved, as usual, a more or less painful process. The idea of relativity, development, growth, became for the first time fundamental in men's thinking. Not only science, but literature as well, has felt profoundly the effect of this idea, while historical research has ever since been carried on in the scientific spirit. The arriving at a conclusion only after patient examination and comparison of the material at hand, only after careful experiment, is the modern scientific method which has transformed the modern world and fulfilled the dreams of Bacon, the father of inductive reasoning. Out of this method have grown the innumerable laboratories which have so largely contributed both to the enlightenment and the happiness of our time.

An Age of Practical Idealism.—No other era can show so many earnest, disinterested seekers after truth, or so many practical idealists. The childlike gladness, the fresh energy, the serene assurance of preceding ages, the Victorians have not; life has become more serious, more complex, and the human consciousness is burdened with a deepening sense of mystery in the presence of great spiritual and social problems. The literature of the latter half of the nineteenth century reflects this spiritual and social unrest in all its forms: we find the poetry of doubt and disillusion, the poetry of courage and faith, the novel of moral purpose, the problem-drama. Literature becomes more purposeful, more thought-laden, as the struggle for existence in the modern city grows more strenuous. Motives are analyzed, the palpitating heart laid bare, the secrets of individual personality ruthlessly revealed for the gratification of an almost morbid curiosity. Literature has come closer to life, but the realism of our greatest prose is happily touched with redeeming idealism. Thus, in spite of its introspective character, Victorian literature is in general hopeful and constructive, while as compared with that of other periods it is essentially democratic, deeply representative of all sorts and conditions of men.

Variety of Victorian Literature. Predominance of the Novel.—The range of literature in this period of inventions and discoveries

has immensely broadened. A bewildering variety of subject matter—social, political, aesthetic, industrial, scientific, religious, philosophic—is to be found in the essayists and novelists. Prose is the prevailing form of literary expression, though the Victorian Era has given to the world two poets of the first rank, besides a number of minor singers. The essay has expanded from a brief, suggestive sketch of a subject into a more or less formal treatise, as illustrated in Macaulay. The great histories of the period are written in such an attractive style that one may regard them as contributions to literature; the same is true of many works on science and philosophy, such as those of Huxley, Tyndall, Darwin, and Spencer. Magazines and newspapers have multiplied enormously in response to the demands of the great busy masses who have neither the leisure nor the culture which the reading of standard literature requires. It is an age in which everybody reads. The reading matter may be good, bad, or indifferent—the informing essay, the sane and wholesome novel, the high-class magazine, the sensational story, the "yellow" journal. Above all else the Victorian is the age of prose fiction: the novel and the short story are as predominant as was the drama in the Elizabethan Age. A pleasing, flexible, and serviceable prose style has gradually developed out of the more formal and polished prose of the eighteenth century. Later English prose has gained in directness, energy, and adaptability since the reign of the novel and the magazine began, though it has lost something in distinction and refinement. The influence of review writing and editorial writing gave rise to what may be called "journalistic prose," an admirable example of which is to be found in the essays of Macaulay. Victorian writers may be divided into three great classes—the Essayists, the Poets, the Novelists.

I. THE ESSAYISTS

The greater essayists of this period are Macaulay, Carlyle, Ruskin, and Arnold; other prominent essayists are Newman, Stevenson, Pater, and the scientist Huxley, the philosopher

Spencer, and the historian Froude. These two groups of essay writers, while by no means including all who wrote with distinction that form of literature, are thoroughly representative. Attention has already been called to the various kinds of essays which have appeared in English literature—the wisdom, or proverb-like, essay of Bacon, the personal and appreciative essay of Addison, Lamb, and De Quincey, the critical essay of Dryden and Johnson. In Macaulay we find one of the most brilliant critical essayists of our literature.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY (1800-1859)

His Life.—Thomas B. Macaulay, man of affairs, essayist and historian, was born at Rothley Temple, Leicestershire, in 1800, son of Zachary Macaulay, a man of means who spent part of his life in the government service. The elder Macaulay was of Scotch descent and of somewhat stern temper; his wife belonged to a prominent Quaker family of Bristol, and to her the young Macaulay owed something of his brilliant wit. Macaulay spent most of his life in London; like Johnson, he knew the city well and loved it devotedly, caring little for the country. He was a precocious child, reading standard books when a few years old and talking like a man. Asked by a lady one day how he felt, the three-year old philosopher, upon whose legs a servant had spilled hot coffee that morning, replied: "Thank you, madam, the agony is abated." Before he was eight Macaulay was writing a Universal History, besides poems on various historical and legendary subjects. From his childhood he was an omnivorous reader. At Cambridge, where he had entered Trinity College in 1818, Macaulay was a brilliant student and forceful debater, noted for his proficiency in the classics. After leaving Cambridge, where he had remained for some years after graduation on a fellowship, he studied law, and was called to the bar in 1826. Before this, however, Macaulay had begun writing for the magazines; in 1825 his now famous *Essay on Milton* appeared in the *Edinburgh Review*, and this brought him widespread recognition. More and more he gave himself to writing, though he continued to study the science of politics, with the result that in 1830 he was elected to the House of Commons. Here he proved himself a successful orator and debater on the Whig side. In 1834 he was appointed a member of the Supreme Council of India, whither he went with his favorite sister Hannah. Macaulay spent four years in India.

After returning to England in 1838 he spent a while in Italy; he then came back home, was again elected to Parliament, and later was made a member of the Cabinet. For years Macaulay had been planning and working on a

history of England, and his increasing interest in this great undertaking led him to retire from active political life. He had, of course, long been one of the best known literary men of England, one of that celebrated London group of authors who were making Victorian prose glorious. He had never married, preferring to give himself to the companionship of his sisters and their families and of his beloved books. His home life was a happy one, while no important literary social gathering in London was complete without the brilliant conversation of Macaulay. In 1857 he was made a baron by Queen Victoria and was henceforth Lord Macaulay. Two years later he died and was buried in the Poets' Corner of Westminster Abbey.

GREAT COURT OF TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

His Personality.—Macaulay was an upright, manly, energetic sort of man, of great industry and ability. He liked the world in which he found himself and was not deeply concerned about greatly changing it; he enjoyed life, was devoted to his kin and they to him, and thought the British government quite admirable as long as the Whigs had control. He had great practical sense, and, with all his gifts of mind and his remarkable knowledge, the point of view of the average man. Macaulay had a phenomenal memory, being able to retain and instantly to recall whole chapters, cantos, and even, it is said, entire volumes of prose and poetry. He read with amazing rapidity, taking in a page in a few seconds and being able years afterwards to repeat the substance of it; he had the rep-

utation of never forgetting what he read. Much of the Bible, *Paradise Lost*, and *Pilgrim's Progress* he said he could repeat verbatim. The lists of books read by him in a year, as given by his nephew, —many of them in Greek and Latin, some in the modern foreign tongues,—seem almost incredible. Macaulay was a wonderful talker, so full was his mind, so ready and so accurate his knowledge.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—Macaulay wrote several volumes of essays, a few poems, and a *History of England*. The essays were originally contributed to *Knight's Quarterly Review*, the *Edinburgh Review*, and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, those for the encyclopaedia being more strictly biographical than the others. Macaulay began writing for *Knight's Quarterly* in 1823, but with the appearance of his *Essay on Milton*, in the *Edinburgh Review* in 1825, his fame was first established, and after that time most of his essays were contributed to that celebrated periodical. The essays are critical and historical, dealing with literary and political leaders and their times. Most of them were written as reviews of new books on old subjects; the appearance of such and such a work furnishes Macaulay an occasion for expressing his opinions on this or that writer or statesman; the essay grows into a treatise, and when the critic has finished there is little more to be said. Macaulay was a busy man of affairs and wrote these essays in such leisure hours as he could command, many of them being composed between five and eight o'clock in the morning. They cover a wide range of subjects, introducing the reader to a wealth of historical and literary details, references, and allusions, poured forth in wonderful profusion. On the shining river of his clear and dashing style we are borne along through old lands and cities lighted up by his vivid historical imagination and graphic narrative and descriptive powers. Johnson, Addison, Bacon, Milton, Goldsmith, Bunyan, Byron, Pitt, Warren Hastings, Walpole, Mirabeau, Machiavelli, and the rest, live again and act their parts before us.

The work on which Macaulay bestowed most pains, however, is the *History of England*, his masterpiece, which he left unfinished

after years of writing. This work was to cover the years from 1685 to about 1830,—that is, from the accession of James II to that of William IV—but the five volumes completed include only fifteen or sixteen years. Macaulay's avowed purpose was to make history interesting, and he succeeded as no other historian has done. Writing in 1841 to his friend Napier, Macaulay had declared: "I shall not be satisfied unless I produce something which shall for a few days supersede the last fashionable novel on the tables of young ladies." This really happened: the first two volumes appeared in 1849 and proved to be "best sellers," a second edition being necessary in ten days. The work was even more popular in the United States, where within a few months two hundred thousand copies were sold; his American publishers wrote: "No work of any kind has ever so completely taken our whole country by storm."

The causes of this unprecedented popularity for a history are not far to seek: Macaulay had, in the first place, a vast fund of accurate and ready knowledge; in the second place, an imagination which enabled him graphically to reconstruct the past; and third, a brilliant journalistic style. He made the facts of his narrative luminous with picturesque description, so that "the average man" could follow him. At a great mass-meeting in one of the northern counties of England, not long after the history was published, "one of the audience rose and moved, in north-country fashion, a vote of thanks to Mr. Macaulay "for having written a history which workingmen can understand."[1] Perhaps the most brilliant chapter in this work is the famous third chapter of volume one, depicting the social England of the last years of the seventeenth century. Macaulay was no profound interpreter of history, but in the important matters of marshalling the facts and re-creating past ages so that history becomes at once vivid and interesting, he has never been surpassed.

Macaulay is the author of several popular poems dealing with the heroic traditions of old Roman life. These poems, known collectively as the *Lays of Ancient Rome* and published in 1842, are

[1] Trevelyan: *Life and Letters of Lord Macaulay,* Vol. II, Chap. 12.

really martial ballads full of fire and movement. "Virginius" and "Horatius at the Bridge" have been deservedly popular for generations with young readers, to whom the courage and patriotism of the Roman heroes make a stirring appeal. He had neither the emotion nor the imagination of a great poet, but his gift of rapid narration and his familiarity with history and legend enabled him to write spirited, vigorous verse on famous old traditions. The objective nature of these ballads of action suggests the poetry of Scott.

Because of his interesting style and his marvelous fund of knowledge Macaulay has been the popularizer of history and literature to his own and every succeeding generation. It has been remarked that all the historical and literary information many people possess came from their reading of Macaulay's essays; these brilliant discussions of men and events have proved a veritable education to hundreds of thousands who had not the advantages of formal training in school and college. He never wrote an obscure sentence in his life; he was not given to philosophic speculation; he was no mystic, but a sensible Englishman who kept close to the ground and the practical considerations of life, and before whom, as Morley says, the world was spread out clear. By his brilliant antithetical style and historical imagination he was indeed able "to throw a golden halo around the secularity of the hour," though he was wanting in depth of thought and in spiritual sensitiveness. But clearness is a cardinal virtue, and the prose of Macaulay is a model of clear, eloquent, and vigorous writing.

THOMAS CARLYLE (1795-1881)

His Life.—Thomas Carlyle, essayist, historian, and prophet, was born at Ecclefechan, Dumfriesshire, Scotland, in 1795, the son of a stonemason of strong character and intellect. His mother, who learned to write in order that she might correspond with her son, was lovingly described by him as "of the fairest descent, that of the pious, the just, and the wise." Carlyle attended the village school until 1809, when he walked eighty miles to Edinburgh and entered the University, his purpose being to prepare for the ministry in accordance with the wish of his father. At the University of Edinburgh he made an excellent record in Latin and mathematics and read an

enormous number of books. After a few years it became clear to Carlyle that he was not intended for the Church, and he spent some time in teaching, first at Annan, then at Kirkaldy, trying in restlessness of spirit meanwhile to decide upon the nature of his life work. At Kirkaldy he met Edward Irving, head of a rival school there, and between the two an enduring friendship was established; Irving soon gave up teaching, went to Edinburgh, and became famous as a preacher. Under his influence Carlyle turned from mathematics to history; he studied German, made translations from French scientific papers, read law books a while, and taught again. All this time he was undergoing great spiritual agony, afflicted with insomnia and dyspepsia, living a sort of befogged existence in Edinburgh. In 1821 came a crisis in his life, when in Leith Walk, as vividly described in *Sartor Resartus*, he hurled defiance at the demon of despair and doubt, experienced a spiritual new-birth, and came out of the struggle a free and resolute man consecrated henceforth to the preaching of the gospel of Work and the smashing of shams.

For several years following this crisis-year of 1821 Carlyle taught, translated from French and German, and contributed articles to the *Edinburgh Encyclopaedia* and to magazines. Between 1822 and 1824 he was tutor to a prominent family in Edinburgh named Buller; the latter year he translated Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and soon thereafter began a correspondence with the great German which continued until Goethe's death in 1832. In 1826 he married Jane Welsh, daughter of a Haddington surgeon, a brilliant and accomplished woman to whom he had been introduced several years before by his friend Edward Irving. Mrs. Carlyle was a rarely gifted woman who fully appreciated the genius of her husband; indeed, she had married him mainly because of his genius, and such little differences as would naturally arise from time to time between two delicately sensitive persons more or less afflicted with poor digestion have been unduly magnified. There can be no doubt that each had for the other an enduring love; loneliness, melancholy, and a certain ironic humor, characteristic of both, sometimes caused utterances which earlier biographers wrongly interpreted. The Carlyles lived for two years at Comley Bank, Edinburgh, then moved to a remote and quiet spot sixteen miles from Dumfries called Craigenputtock, where they spent six years. In this barren, lonely place the young author wrote his first really significant work, *Sartor Resartus;* here also the *Essay on Burns* was written; meanwhile Carlyle had won the esteem of Jeffrey, the famous reviewer. Finding it difficult to do literary work away from great libraries, Carlyle left Craigenputtock in 1834 to make London his home.

The rest of his long life was spent in London at 5, Cheyne Row, Chelsea, preserved as a Carlyle memorial now, whither every year thousands of lovers of the "Sage of Chelsea" make their pilgrimage. The publication of

the *French Revolution* in 1837 brought him international recognition. He soon came to know the great literary men of his own and other countries; Emerson had come across the Atlantic to visit him at Craigenputtock, and the two kept up for years a correspondence. At first the Chelsea household was a frugal one; the master was struggling into fame, working hard at his

CARLYLE MONUMENT, CHELSEA, LONDON

essays, histories, lectures, in that double-walled study on the top floor so constructed that the noises of the street and the crowing of neighboring roosters might not disturb him. He and his brilliant wife became the center of a group of distinguished men of letters who liked to drop in and take a cup of tea and talk philosophy and literature. John Stuart Mill, Leigh Hunt, Landor, Kingsley, Dickens, Ruskin, Browning, Tennyson, and others

were visitors there. The stream of talk did not always flow, if we may credit the story of one of Tennyson's visits: Carlyle and Tennyson sat silent by the fireside the evening through, each smoking his pipe. When at length Tennyson arose to go, Carlyle broke the two or three hours of siience with the words: "We've had a grand evening, Alfred; come again."

Honors of various kinds came to Carlyle, but he probably regarded his election as Rector of the University of Edinburgh in 1865 as the greatest. He went to the old Scottish city the next year to deliver his inaugural address, and received a notable ovation from the officials and students of the University. In the midst of this triumph came to him the sad news of his wife's sudden death of heart failure while driving in Hyde Park, London. From this blow the old man never fully recovered: the light of his life, he said, had gone out, and the remaining fifteen years of his existence were for the most part given to lamenting his loss and paying tribute to the virtues of Jane Welsh Carlyle. Carlyle died in 1881, and according to his wish was buried among his kindred in the humble little village of Ecclefechan, though the English people thought Westminster Abbey the proper resting place for so great a genuis.

His Personality.—The personality of Carlyle is one of the most interesting in nineteenth century literature; we know a good deal about him, for many who saw and conversed with him have left us their impressions, while he himself had much to say of his own life. The bent, gloomy, sad-faced man so familiar to the dwellers in Chelsea in his later years, the stern and lonely prophet in his study attacking shams and half-cynically upbraiding a crooked and perverse generation,—that is the Carlyle of the popular mind. There is, however, a more attractive Carlyle whom Emerson visited at Craigenputtock in 1833, and whom he describes as "tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, self-possessed and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish; full of lively anecdote, and with streaming humor which floated everything he looked upon."

Along with the intensity and deep purposefulness of his nature there went a grim and picturesque humor which showed itself when he was talking in frequent volcanic bursts of laughter, as if he were mightily amused at "the biped called man," himself included. At heart, he was one of the tenderest of men, but his

Scotch reticence kept him from laying bare his heart in talk as he did in writing. He had struggled hard, he was a prodigious worker, he was afflicted all his life with insomnia and dyspepsia, he had passed through great spiritual agony in earlier life, and he had the melancholy and the sense of loneliness that so often accompany genius.

His Works and Literary Characteristics.—The writings of Carlyle may be roughly divided into Essays, Histories, and Biographies. He began his literary career by translating Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* and writing a *Life of Schiller* for the *London Magazine*, and thus introduced the English reading public to German literature. Then followed a number of essays contributed to the *Edinburgh Review* and other periodicals, especially *Fraser's Magazine*, the most striking of which are those on *Burns*, *Goethe*, *Characteristics*, *Biography*, *Boswell's Life of Johnson*, and *Sir Walter Scott*. Most of these were occasioned by new biographies which were then in the hands of readers or by the appearance of new editions of the works of well-known authors. The most widely read of these earlier essays of Carlyle is, of course, the *Essay on Burns*, which appeared in 1828, in the *Edinburgh Review*, following Lockhart's *Life of Burns*, published the same year.

The *Essay on Burns* is one of the best things Carlyle ever did, both in style and content, though it is hardly typical: its freedom from involved and jerky phraseology separates it from many of the subsequent utterances written in true "Carlylese." Sympathy for the man Burns, pity for his frailties, and profound admiration for his sincerity and the "indisputable air of Truth" about his poetry, led Carlyle to present the most attractive portrait of the Scotch poet in our literature. His vital sympathy for Burns, it must be remembered, was due first of all to the fact that Carlyle himself had also struggled, was poor, and had peasant ancestry; then, too, Burns was a fellow-countryman whose best verse celebrates in a very spontaneous way the strong and simple life of the Scottish people. The subject was entirely congenial to Carlyle, and forms the first of that long series of hero pictures which make up so considerable a part of his writing.

In 1840, Carlyle delivered a series of six lectures in London, which were published the next year under the title, *Heroes and Hero Worship*. In these he set forth in striking phrase and with apt illustration his theory that "universal history, the history of what man has accomplished in this world, is at bottom the history of the great men who have worked here." Choosing a few typical heroes of the world—Odin, the old Norse god, Mohammed, Dante, Luther, Johnson, Cromwell—he discusses the Hero as Divinity, as Prophet, as Poet, as Man of Letters, and as King. Carlyle did not accept the modern notion that man is in great part the product of his environment and that history is an evolution of certain definite forces, social, political, and other. For the democratic and scientific tendencies of his day and ours, he cared little; with him the great man, the leader, the hero, was everything. The biographies of great men formed, in his opinion, the essence of history.

The one book in which Carlyle most fully reveals the depths of his own personality, the spiritual autobiography into which he put the struggles of years, is *Sartor Resartus* (The Tailor Repatched). This extraordinary volume appeared as a serial in *Fraser's Magazine* in 1833–1834; Emerson, one of the very few upon whom it thus early made a profound impression, had the work published in book form in the United States, where it was well received; the first English edition came out two years later, in 1838. *Sartor Resartus* purports to be a translation, with running comments by Carlyle, of a manuscript left by a certain German professor, one Herr Teufelsdröckh, of the University of Weissnichtwo (Don't-know-where); and so cleverly did Carlyle act the part of editor and translator of the supposed manuscript that many were led to look for the fictitious professor and his university in encyclopaedia and atlas. The subject is the philosophy of clothes, by which Carlyle means the outward vesture or symbol of things—conventional customs, traditions, opinions—concealing the inner soul or reality. He would teach men to look through the deceptive coverings to the vital spirit of truth, the divine reality, concealed by them. The book as a whole is an

attack on various kinds of shams, a chaotic jumble of philosophy, rhapsody, humor, romance, and exhortation. The work contains the germ of Carlyle's later writings. It is written in the queerest sort of style, rugged, uncouth, disjointed, and sometimes strangely beautiful and tender—the unique prose-poem of our literature.

Of the historical works of Carlyle—the *French Revolution* (1837), *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* (1845), and the *Life and Times of Frederick the Great* (1858–1865)—the *French Revolution* is the most remarkable for its dramatic power and for the flash-light thrown upon the actors and scenes in that blood-and-thunder upheaval of the old social and political order. It is not a history in the usual sense, and one who does not already know something of the events referred to will have a hard time interpreting Carlyle's pictures, for the painter assumes an acquaintance with the bare facts on the part of the reader. The book is an illuminated panorama, with thunder-and-lightning accompaniment, of the movements of infuriated mobs, of guillotinings, of stormings of prisons and palaces, and of the deaths of great personages. In *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches* Carlyle made a lifelike portrayal of the great Puritan leader, changing the popular conception of Cromwell as a fanatic and hypocrite to one of regard for him as a patriotic and sincere leader. The *Life of John Sterling* (1851) is one of the best biographies in the language, written out of Carlyle's personal knowledge and love of a noble character. In all these works he simply applies in an extended way his earlier method of dealing with great men as heroes.

Carlyle's Style.—So unlike all other prose styles in English literature is that of Carlyle, that a brief paragraph must be given to a characterization of it. The first thing to be noted is the richness of his vocabulary: the variety of his diction and his readiness to "coin words to fit his ideas" remind one of Shakespeare. Certain of his favorite words, which John Sterling characterized as "positively barbarous,"—such as "environment," "visualized," "talented,"—have become common enough since his day. Carlyle had a keen pictorial sense which expressed itself in picturesque phraseology, particularly in his descriptions of persons and dra-

matic scenes. Indeed, his descriptive power has not been surpassed in nineteenth-century prose, not even by the novelists. In the making of his sentences he avoids an artificial model, and consequently in such works as *Sartor Resartus* and the *French Revolution* there is abundant ground for his editorial comment on the style of Herr Teufelsdröckh, which is, of course, his own:

> Of his sentences perhaps not more than nine tenths stand straight on their legs; the remainder are in quite angular attitudes, buttressed up by props (of parentheses and dashes), and ever with this or the other tag-rag hanging from them; a few even sprawl out helplessly on all sides, quite broken-backed and dismembered.

This eccentric sentence-building is naturally most noticeable when Carlyle's sense of the ludicrous runs riot, as it often does; but when the mood is gentler, the harmony of the cadenced sentences is like the subdued music of great poetry, and then his utterance is simple and straightforward. Thus, in speaking of the death of Goethe he says:

> So then our greatest has departed. That melody of life, with its cunning tones, which took captive ear and heart, has gone silent; the heavenly force that dwelt here victorious over so much is here no longer; thus far, not farther, by speech and by act, shall the wise man utter himself forth.

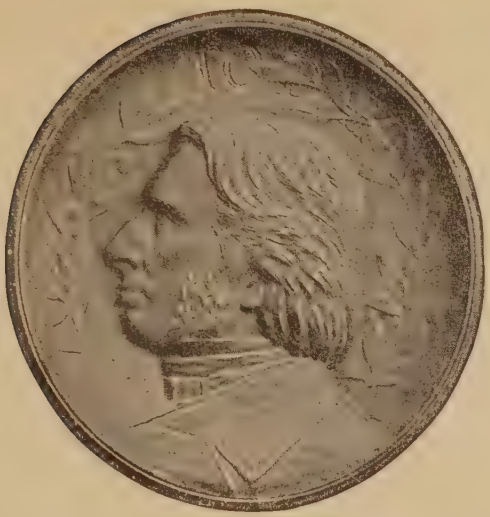
Carlyle's Message.—Carlyle's militant moral earnestness was a tonic to his own generation, which was about to lose its hold on the eternal verities through the ease and self-complacency that attend great material prosperity. His mission was to keep men from being too much at ease in Zion; against their indifference to truth, their spiritual indolence, their contentment with things as they are, he thundered with the energy and zeal of an old Hebrew prophet. He preached the sacredness of Duty, the dignity of Labor, and the sustaining power of the gospel of Work. He insisted that every one should find out his task and stand to it: "Up! up! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Work while it is called to-day; for the night cometh wherein no man can work." Next to his insistence on the duty of

Work is that on the duty of Veracity, or Sincerity, as opposed to cant and sham. To those who assert that happiness is the chief end of life he said: "The end of man is an Action and not a Thought, though it were the noblest." Carlyle's views of politics and science were thoroughly conservative, almost reactionary; he had no faith in democracies, while for modern science, especially evolution, his contempt was as great as was his ignorance of its principles and progress. The stimulating effect of his message on his own and later days has proved immense; it can be safely said that he helped to raise the ethical tone of the English people, while his friends, Ruskin and Tennyson, gladly acknowledged the influence of his mighty spirit on their own lives.

JOHN RUSKIN (1819-1900)

His Life.—John Ruskin, art critic and social reformer, was born in London in 1819, the son of a prosperous and cultured wine merchant of Scotch descent. In London and its suburbs Ruskin spent over half of his life. His early training in books he received from his mother, who made him read daily the Bible and memorize long chapters of it, until the contents and style became a familiar possession. Later in life he wrote of this first schooling: "My mother forced me to learn long chapters of the Bible by heart; as well as to read it every syllable through aloud, hard names and all, from Genesis to the Apocalypse, about once a year; and to that discipline—patient, accurate, and resolute—I owe, not only a knowledge of the book, which I find occasionally serviceable, but much of my general power of taking pains, and the best part of my taste in literature." His father had a good library, and the boy was early made acquainted with standard literature: Scott's *Waverley Novels*, Pope's translation of Homer, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Pilgrim's Progress*, Shakespeare, Cervantes, and other classics he either read himself or listened to his father read. Having learned to draw, he illustrated his own books, and so he was gradually led to understand art. His home was adorned with pictures and curios, which his father's wealth and good taste had provided, and from these all unconsciously he was trained into an appreciation of the beautiful. Every summer, too, the family went on a two months' drive through the loveliest parts of England and Scotland.

On his fourteenth birthday Ruskin was presented by his father's business partner with a copy of the poet Rogers's *Italy*, illustrated by Turner, the great artist, whose name was destined to become more familiar to the world through his young admirer's works. The reading of this poem and the study of the illustrations in it formed a crisis in Ruskin's life, for they



JOHN RUSKIN
From the Memorial Cross on Derwent Water, Lake District

filled him with a desire to see the Alps and the art treasures of Italy. Accordingly, the next summer the family made a tour of Germany, Switzerland, and northern Italy; this was the first of Ruskin's numerous visits to Italy, which furnished him with material for much of his writings on art. In 1836 Ruskin entered Christ Church College, Oxford University, where he was a good student. Ill health interfered with his college course; he went to Italy for a year or two, returning to Oxford in 1842 to take his degree. Ruskin's sensitive nature and girlish ways at first provoked a good deal of amusement among his fellow-students at Oxford, but his intellectual powers soon won their respect. While at the University he won the Newdigate prize in poetry and wrote a magazine article on some geological observations in the Alps and several articles on architecture.

With no taste for business and with no desire to enter the Church, for which his fond parents had intended him, Ruskin fortunately followed his fancy and became an art critic. The rest of his life, except for an episode or two, may be read in his books, which are steeped in his own personality. From 1842 to 1860 he gave himself with singular devotion to the interpretation of art, to writing, lecturing, traveling, studying. His first great work was *Modern Painters;* his fame grew as his list of books lengthened. His marriage in 1848 to a beautiful Scotch girl was a mistake, for she was

fond of gay social life while Ruskin was a quiet student; after a few years they separated by mutual consent and no blame attaches to either. From 1869 to 1879 and during 1883-1884 Ruskin was Professor of Art at Oxford, lecturing to crowded halls of students and others. His popularity with his students, as well as his willingness to work out his own theories, may be gathered from the fact that professor and students used to go out from Oxford and mend the roads in the neighborhood and do landscape-gardening just for the joy of the working.

After 1860 Ruskin became an ardent social reformer, and henceforth his writings are intensely purposeful. The last twenty-five or thirty years of his life were spent for the most part at Brantwood on Coniston Water in the Lake District, whither he went after the death of his father and mother. Here the old man lived quietly, his mind darkened at times by severe attacks of brain fever and his spirit saddened by the failure of some of his plans for reform and by the rampant materialism of a scientific age. Ruskin died in 1900 and was buried in the village churchyard at Coniston. Among the numerous floral offerings sent from various parts of the kingdom was a simple one from the local village tailor with a card bearing the inscription: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John."

Ruskin as Art Critic.—The works of Ruskin fall naturally into two fairly well-defined groups: those having to do with art as an expression of the true, the beautiful, and the good, and pointing out to the people of England what they should admire; and those concerned with the proper conduct of life, declaring to his countrymen what they should do and be. Up to 1860 he devoted himself to the interpretation of art; and then he gave himself energetically to instructing Englishmen in social and ethical principles, earnestly appealing to them to apply these principles. The principal works of this earlier period are *Modern Painters* (1843–1860), *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* (1849), and *The Stones of Venice* (1851–1853). The first of the five volumes of *Modern Painters* was in defense of the great English artist, J. W. M. Turner, whom many of the older critics did not understand. Ruskin's eulogy of Turner provoked the hostility of the orthodox art critics, but won for him among the more open-minded lovers of art, especially the poets, enthusiastic praise, which has since been abundantly justified by the universal recognition of Turner as one of the great artists of the world. In the second and succeeding volumes

of *Modern Painters* Ruskin sets forth in detail his ideas about the nature and uses of art: (1) art is the revealer of truth; (2) the main business of art is "its service in the actual uses of daily life"; (3) art, in so far as it reveals truth and serves men, is inseparably connected with morality.

In *The Stones of Venice*—a minute study of the churches and palaces of that old city in the sea—and in *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* Ruskin shows his devotion to Gothic architecture; in these works also he has much to say of the moral element in art. He believed that as great architecture is a reflection of the virtues and vices of a nation, so art in general reveals the moral strength and weakness of the artist. Noble art implies a noble individual or national life, and the right appreciation of such art demands real nobility of soul. Ruskin held, moreover, that art should follow nature, striving to represent things as they probably did look and happen. Thus he allied himself with the Pre-Raphaelite brotherhood composed of such men as Holman Hunt and Sir John Millais, the artists, and William Morris and Rossetti, the poets, each of whom aimed at producing work in the spirit that prevailed before the time of Raphael.

Ruskin as Social Reformer.—The most important of the group of Ruskin's works devoted to social reform are *Sesame and Lilies* (1865), *The Ethics of the Dust* (1866), *The Crown of Wild Olive* (1866), and *Fors Clavigera* (1871–1874). "There is no wealth but life," says Ruskin,—"life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration. That country is the richest which nourishes the greatest number of noble and happy human beings." Ruskin did not simply teach; he actually practised what he preached, reminding us somewhat in this respect of Tolstoi, the Russian reformer. He not only spent almost all of the large fortune left him by his father on his social projects—the founding of art schools, libraries, museums, coöperative stores, St. George's Guild in London,—but worked with his own hands at making roads, cleaning streets, and the like, besides lecturing and writing letters to bodies of laboring-men.

Many of the reforms for which Ruskin contended, and for the

advocacy of which he was laughed at and even violently attacked in his own day, have since been realized; others we are now trying to work out by our modern method of coöperation. He went too far, of course, in his protests against machinery and other forms of industrial progress, but we must not be too swift to condemn such a sincere prophet as he was, crying out a warning against a growing spirit of materialism and a consequent indifference to moral values. He, like Carlyle, was a preacher of social righteousness and human brotherhood, proclaiming the beauty and the duty of honest work.

Sesame and Lilies and The Crown of Wild Olive.—Every student should at least read *Sesame and Lilies* and *The Crown of Wild Olive*. *Sesame and Lilies* consists of two lectures, "Of Kings' Treasuries" and "Of Queens' Gardens." By "Kings' Treasuries" Ruskin means great books written by kingly men, the reading of which ennobles you and me. He discusses what and how to read, the treasures hidden in books; the way we find them and the way we lose them; the treatment is ethical, or with reference to the conduct of life, as it is in his works on painting and architecture. "Whatever bit of a wise man's work is honestly and benevolently done, that bit is his book or his piece of art." "Sesame" is the magic word or talisman which, as used in the *Arabian Nights*, is a key to unlock rich treasures. Ruskin goes on to talk about the folly of regarding material wealth as the basis of a nation's greatness; a nation that cares nothing for literature, science, art, beauty, compassion, can never be great. The value of words is illustrated by a careful study of a passage from Milton's "Lycidas." The well-known paragraph in *Sesame and Lilies* on the fellowship of good books everyone should read and reread:

> Will you go and gossip with your housemaid, or your stable-boy, when you may talk with queens and kings; or flatter yourself that it is with any worthy consciousness of your own claims to respect, that you jostle with the hungry and common crowd for *entrée* here, and audience there, when all the while this eternal court is open to you, with its society, wide as the world, multitudinous as its days, the chosen and the mighty, of every place

and time? Into that you may enter always; in that you may take fellowship and rank according to your wish; from that, once entered into, you can never be an outcast but by your own fault.

The second lecture, "Of Queens' Gardens," treats of ideal womanhood, woman's education, and woman's influence in the world. The theme is the same as that of Tennyson's *Princess*, and the views advanced in the two works essentially the same. Ruskin's discussion of woman's training and work is sane, beautiful, and wholesome, though the flavor is a little old-fashioned. The word "Lilies" in the title of the book was suggested to Ruskin by the use of the lily in Isaiah as a symbol of purity, peace, and beauty.

The Crown of Wild Olive consists of four lectures on "Work," "Traffic," "War," and the "Future of England," delivered before working men, business men, and soldiers. Aside from the matter, *The Crown of Wild Olive* contains some of Ruskin's finest prose. *The Ethics of the Dust* is concerned with the education of young housewives, and is excellent reading for young women. In addition to these works, one should read *The Queen of the Air* for the beauty of its symbolism and the delightful idealism of its teaching; while for an entertaining record of Ruskin's life, written at the suggestion of his friend Charles Eliot Norton, great American scholar and art critic, *Praeterita* (1887), a delightful autobiography, should be read.

Ruskin's Style.—The prose of Ruskin is among the noblest in the whole range of literature; one is reminded in reading it aloud of the simple and yet heightened diction of the English Bible, on which he was brought up, and the long musical periods of such seventeenth-century writers as Thomas Browne and Jeremy Taylor. Ruskin says in *The Queen of the Air* that he has three ways of writing: "one with the single view of making myself understood, in which case I necessarily omit a great deal of what comes into my head; another, in which I say what I think ought to be said, in what I suppose to be the best words I can find for it (which is in reality an affected style—be it good or bad); and my third way of writing is to say all that comes into my head

for my own pleasure, in the first words that come, retouching them afterwards." The second of these styles is most characteristic of Ruskin, by the common consent of readers his greatest,—the ornate, or "decorated" style, of which the principal elements are poetic color and rhythm.

MATTHEW ARNOLD (1822-1888)

His Life.—Matthew Arnold, essayist and poet, was born at Laleham, in the valley of the Thames, in 1822, the son of Dr. Thomas Arnold, the famous headmaster of Rugby, a familiar figure to readers of *Tom Brown's School Days*. After preliminary training at Winchester and Rugby, Arnold entered Balliol College, Oxford, in 1841. At Oxford he won a scholarship and the Newdigate prize for a poem on Cromwell, stood well in the classics, and entered heartily into the social and athletic life of the University. In 1845 he was elected a fellow of Oriel College; after leaving Oxford the same year, Arnold returned to Rugby, and for a short time taught in the school there. In 1847 he was appointed secretary to Lord Lansdowne, an influential member of the British government, serving in this position until 1851, when he was made inspector of schools. The same year he married Miss Frances Wightman, daughter of a prominent English judge. The home life of Arnold was a happy one; few literary men indeed, have shown greater love for family and intimate friends than Arnold: he was a charming companion, versatile and witty, and specially fond of children. The inspectorship of English schools Arnold held for thirty-five years, during which he visited the continent several times in order to study educational conditions, examined teachers and corrected tens of thousands of examination papers,—drudgery which he performed with commendable thoroughness. Meanwhile he had written considerable poetry.

Recognition of his worth as a poet and a critic is to be found in his appointment in 1857 as Professor of Poetry at the University of Oxford, a position which he filled with distinction for ten years. The duties of this office did not conflict with those of his school inspectorship, which he continued to hold; but the preparation of lectures for Oxford students led him into the field of literary criticism and away from the production of poetry. Henceforth he is preëminently the critic and essayist. Arnold's writing was usually done at night as recreation after a hard day's work at the details of his somewhat exacting vocation; and when one considers the number of volumes he turned out, one's admiration for his industry is as great as one's delight in the brilliant quality of his achievement. In 1883 he received a pension from the government, and the same year he sailed for America to give a course of lectures. These lectures were not of the popular type,

but because of Arnold's fame as a critic and a poet his audiences were large. The American newspapers made good-natured fun of his supercilious manner, and probably no one enjoyed their comments more than Arnold himself. He made many new friends, however, and carried back home a respectable tribute of American dollars. Three years later he again visited the United States, where he now had a married daughter; but ill health kept him from the full enjoyment of this visit. Two years later, in 1888, he died suddenly in Liverpool, whither he had gone to meet his daughter who had a few days before sailed from New York. He is buried in the churchyard at Laleham, his ancestral home.

Arnold as a Poet.—Most of Arnold's poetry, as already indicated, was written before he became Professor of Poetry at Oxford in 1857, his last poems appearing the very year (1876) he retired from that chair. Of the longer narrative poems the most notable are *Balder Dead* and *Sohrab and Rustum.* In the first he chose a theme from the old Norse mythology; in the second, he clothed in singularly musical verse the Persian legend of the death of the heroic young warrior Sohrab at the hands of his father, the mighty Rustum, who, separated from his son in infancy, recognizes him by a gold bracelet only after he has mortally wounded his young unknown antagonist. There are few more solemnly beautiful lines in English poetry than those at the end of *Sohrab and Rustum* telling how Rustum and his son were left alone there on the banks of the majestic river Oxus in the stillness of the starlit night. Arnold's one important dramatic poem is *Empedocles on Etna,* based on the old classic myth. Among the shorter poems those most worthy to be read and reread are "Thyrsis," an elegy on the poet Clough, "Rugby Chapel," a tribute to his father, "The Grande Chartreuse," "The Scholar-Gypsy," "A Southern Night," "Switzerland," "Kensington Gardens," "Self-Dependence," "Requiescat," "The Future," "Shakespeare," "Philomela," and "Dover Beach." "Dover Beach," in particular, voices that strain of disillusion which sounds through Arnold's poetry, full of haunting sadness and exquisite regret at the loss of earlier faith.

Finding little comfort in the older dogmas of philosophy and religion, Arnold falls back on a kind of stoical resignation, bracing

himself against the inevitable. He did not, like Tennyson, patiently build up a new and shining structure out of the wrecks of the old by "faintly trusting the larger hope," until doubt yielded to a working faith. Arnold's poetry is coldly intellectual, Greek in form, without buoyancy and hope, and suffused with wistful melancholy; and in many of his readers, beset with the perplexities of an age of transition, it found a sympathetic responsiveness. Because it does voice the inarticulate questionings of so many thoughtful men and women, and because it has imperishable distinction of form, Matthew Arnold, in the opinion of an increasing number of readers, deserves to rank as the third great poet of the Victorian Era.

Arnold as Critic.—Arnold's prose writings consist of essays on literature, politics, religion, and education. Representative volumes are the following: *On Translating Homer* and *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, two illuminating lectures delivered at Oxford; *Culture and Anarchy*, in which Arnold sets forth his gospel of ideas and severely arraigns British "Philistinism"; *Literature and Dogma*, a plea for a liberal, literary interpretation of the Bible; *Discourses in America*, three lectures given in the United States; *Essays in Criticism*, first and second series, containing his most significant utterances as a literary critic. The essay on "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," found in *Essays in Criticism*, first series (1865), is an exposition of Arnold's critical method. He defines criticism as "a disinterested endeavour to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world." To him culture is not "a having and a resting," but "a getting and a becoming"; he would incite men to the pursuit of perfection by freeing them from provinciality; he would have them "help make reason and the will of God prevail" by establishing "a current of fresh and true ideas." The essential attitude of the critic is one of disinterestedness; only thus can he hope to see things as they really are and to make the best ideas prevail. By the "Philistines"—a word much used in his works—Arnold means the self-satisfied, provincial, self-complacent members of the prosperous British middle-class whose minds are quite im-

pervious to new ideas; these persons he never wearies of satirizing.

Arnold's style is severely intellectual, Greek in its restraint, luminous, passionless except when he is writing of Oxford,—which he devotedly loved and abundantly scolded—and almost Addisonian in its urbanity. He has enriched our language with a number of striking phrases, which have become a part of the equipment of talkers and writers on literature: "high seriousness," "sweetness and light" (borrowed from Swift), "the not ourselves which makes for righteousness," "sweet reasonableness," "natural magic," poetry as "a criticism of life," "lucidity of mind," "the grand style,"—these are some of his well-known expressions. He is fond of hitting off a writer's character or style by a taking phrase; as, for instance, when he calls Shelley "a beautiful and ineffectual angel," or declares that "Burke saturates politics with thought," or characterizes Emerson as "the friend and aider of those who would live in the spirit." It would be hard to find more exquisitely modulated prose than that in Arnold's apostrophe to Oxford,—"steeped in sentiment as she lies, spreading her gardens to the moonlight, and whispering from her towers the last enchantments of the Middle Age,"—and that at the beginning of the Emerson essay on Newman's preaching in St. Mary's. The best essays of Arnold for the general reader are those in his first and second series on *Criticism* and that on Emerson in the *Discourses in America*.

Aside from the merits of his critical opinions—and these are great —Matthew Arnold rendered a notable service to English literature when he made his readers familiar with some of the rarer spirits of continental literature, particularly the great French critic Sainte-Beuve, of whom he was in a certain sense a follower. Arnold himself, because of his open-mindedness, wide culture, keen intellectual power, and lucid style, is the foremost literary critic of the Victorian period.

John Henry Newman (1801–1890).—Newman was born in London, and educated at Oxford, where he became Fellow of Oriel College and vicar of St. Mary's church in the same Universi-

ty. He was a leader in the Oxford High Church movement which sought to revive in the English Church the spiritual devotion, the poetry, and the mystic charm of the Middle Ages. In 1845 he was received into the Catholic Church, and was made a cardinal in 1879. Such in brief is the life of Cardinal Newman, hymn-writer, theologian, and essayist. Everyone who has read the opening paragraph of Matthew Arnold's lecture on Emerson will remember the tribute to Newman, the University preacher, by his younger contemporary: "Who could resist the charm of that spiritual apparition, gliding in the dim afternoon light through the aisles of St. Mary's, rising into the pulpit, and then, in the most entrancing of voices, breaking the silence with words and thoughts which were a religious music,—subtle, sweet, mournful?"

Newman was, of course, primarily a theologian, but he delivered a series of lectures as Rector of Dublin University, entitled collectively *The Idea of a University* (1852), and wrote a defense of his own life, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864)—a religious autobiography, justifying his change from the English Church to the Roman, and in reply to Charles Kingsley's charge of hypocrisy. These, along with other works, show him to be a master of English prose. His style is easy, lucid, and leisurely; it shows "the mood of the man of the world, sweetened and ennobled, and enriched by profound knowledge and deep feeling and spiritual seriousness."[1] As a whole, Newman's writings are not very quotable, so closely woven is the tissue of his thought; but now and then one comes across such epigrams as these: "Great things are done by devotion to one idea"; "Calculation never made a hero"; "Here below to live is to change, and to be perfect is to have changed often." The distinction of Newman's personality shines through his style, which has "the charm of an incommunicable simplicity,"—to use a phrase from one of his lectures. In addition to his numerous prose works, Newman wrote many poems, the most famous of which is "Lead, Kindly Light," one of the great hymns of the world.

[1] Gates: *Selections from Newman*, Introduction, XLII.

Walter Pater (1839–1894).—As a stylist pure and simple, an interpreter of the Italian Renaissance to the nineteenth century, and leader of the "Aesthetic Movement" in English letters,—which grew out of the Pre-Raphaelite movement already referred to in connection with Ruskin,—Walter Pater is unique. He was born in London, educated at Oxford, and spent most of his life as Fellow of Brasenose College in the old University city, quietly weaving his exquisite tapestry of subtle fancies. Some of his works are: *Studies in the History of the Renaissance, Marius the Epicurean, Imaginary Portraits, Appreciations, Plato and Platonism.* Pater was a sensitive student of art and literature, keenly alive to their coloring and mystery. He was something of a refined Epicurean, finding an aesthetic delight in the atmosphere of mediaeval painting and poetic literature in place of the purely material pleasures of life. His style is accordingly colored with his own emotional impressions, and musically modulated for him that hath ears to hear. His artistry is well-nigh perfect. So steeped in culture is he, indeed, so allusive and harmonious in expression, that the casual reader would find it difficult to follow him; for Pater wrote for his own pleasure, intent upon his art and indifferent to fame and the reader. His most widely read sketch is *The Child in the House*, a little autobiographic reminiscence, which reveals in words of rare simplicity and lingering charm the mind of a sensitive, reflective child as interpreted by the same child grown into the man.

Other Victorian Essayists.—Several other men in this period have written essays that have become classics in English prose; but as they gave themselves more largely to a different species of literary production, or to history, or to science, or to philosophy, a brief mention of their respective contributions to the essay must suffice. ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON, for instance, wrote a number of appreciative and personal essays; the greater part of his writing, however, is prose fiction, and it therefore seems best to consider his work as a whole under the novelists. JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE (1818-1894) was a historian with remarkable narrative and descriptive powers, a vivacious and racy style, and

a glowing imagination. These characteristics are, of course, essentially literary, and enabled Froude to write history vividly and interestingly, though not always accurately. Several chapters in his *History of England*,—for example, that on the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, and that on the defeat of the Spanish Armada—are among the most brilliant pieces of writing in English prose; while Froude's *Short Studies on Great Subjects* and his two sketches, *John Bunyan* and *Julius Caesar*, are essays of great insight and literary charm.

Among the writings of the scientific group—Huxley, Darwin, and Tyndall—we find certain works that have the qualities of genuine literature. The *Autobiography, Essays and Lectures* of THOMAS HENRY HUXLEY (1825-1895) have a more distinct literary value than those of his colleagues, because of the wide and deep human interest of Huxley, who delivered popular addresses on scientific subjects, and because of his perfectly clear, trenchant, concrete style and his courage and humor. As a defender of the theory of evolution and as an advocate of a more modern form of education in England, Huxley engaged in a number of lively controversies of the day on those subjects. He was a zealous champion of the truth as he saw it, and fought the "Philistines" with the energy of a born controversialist. Huxley knew how to humanize his knowledge; this makes such essays as *A Liberal Education*, *The Principal Subjects of Education*, *The Physical Basis of Life*, and *A Piece of Chalk*, vitally interesting to the general reader to-day.

CHARLES DARWIN (1809-1882) is famous as the author of a book, *The Origin of Species* (1859), which has the distinction of marking an epoch in scientific thinking. The theory of evolution by the process of natural selection is set forth with great clearness and patience; around this book a violent controversy was waged, but in the long run it has directly or indirectly influenced every department of human thought. Of the philosophers of this period, those whose essays are most closely akin to literature proper are HERBERT SPENCER (1820-1903), and JOHN STUART MILL (1806-1873). Spencer interpreted the philosophical aspects

of evolution, and built up a great system of *Synthetic Philosophy* in ten volumes; his best known essays are those on *Education* and the *Philosophy of Style.* Mill advocated what is known as the utilitarian philosophy; of his works the two best entitled to be called literature are the *Autobiography* and the stimulating *Essay on Liberty.*

II. THE VICTORIAN POETS

The two supreme poets of the Victorian Era are Alfred Tennyson and Robert Browning; each in his way reflects the spirit of this age of democracy and science, of speculation and analysis, of social and religious unrest. Since the splendid triumph of Romanticism in the radiant dreams of Shelley, the Mediaevalism of Coleridge and Keats, the passion of Byron, and the reflective mood of Wordsworth, a change may be felt in the tone of English poetry. Upon the whole it is more directly concerned with the social and spiritual problems of life and more personal in expression. Doubt, faith, disillusion, struggle, courage, hope are characteristic notes in the poetry of the age; there is, moreover, greater versatility in subject matter as well as a more conscious art. After Tennyson and Browning come Matthew Arnold (whose poetry has already been discussed),[1] Clough, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Morris, and Charles Algernon Swinburne,—the last three continuing in a more marked degree than the others the traditions of the romantic poets. Alfred Tennyson is by common consent the representative poet of Victorian England.

ALFRED TENNYSON (1809-1892)

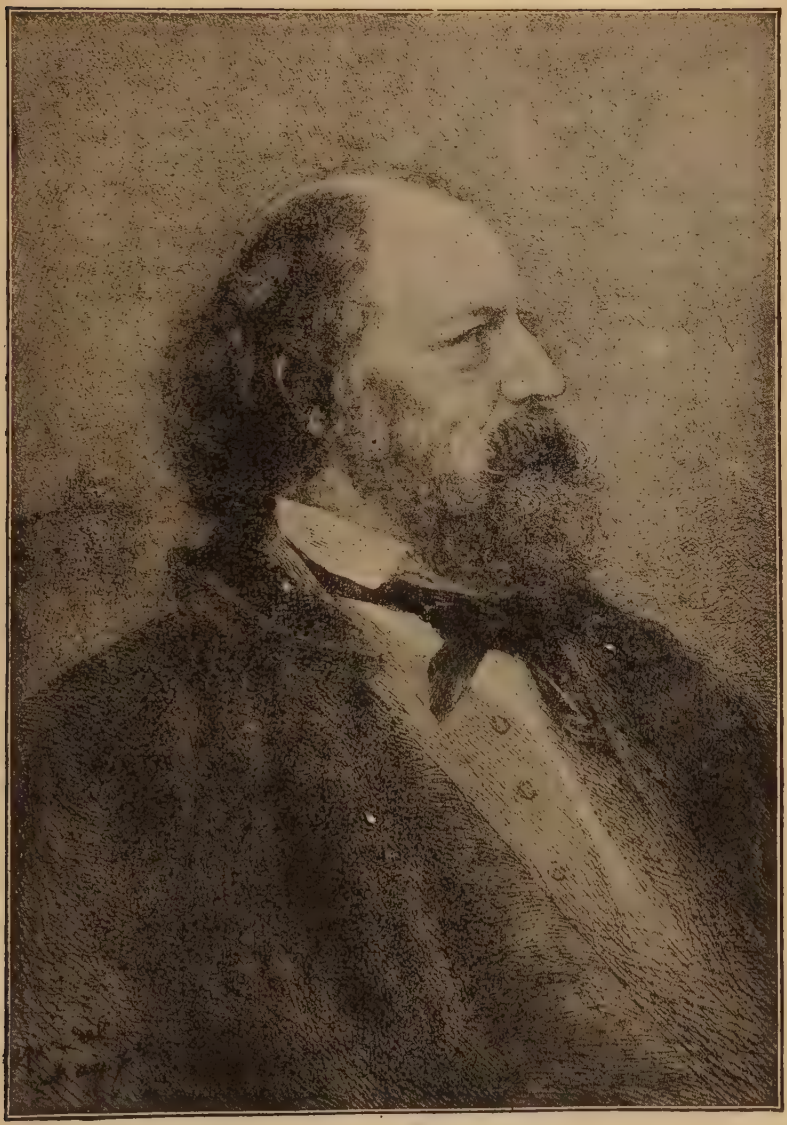
His Life.—Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby in Lincolnshire in 1809,—that birth year of half a dozen famous men—the son of the rector of the parish, himself a man of culture and ability. On both sides of the house Tennyson came of an old and honorable family. He was prepared for college in a school at Louth and then by his father at home, entering

[1]See page 379.

Trinity College, Cambridge, along with his brother Charles in 1828. Meanwhile Tennyson had written a number of poems, the best of which were published under the title, *Poems by Two Brothers*, the thin volume containing also the youthful productions of Charles Tennyson. At Cambridge Tennyson was a member of a debating society known as "The Apostles," composed of a few choice spirits, some of whom later on attained great distinction in literature, the church, and politics. Among these was Arthur Henry Hallam, intimate friend of Tennyson, whom he immortalized in *In Memoriam*. To his friends Tennyson was already distinguished for his love of poetry and his sympathetic recitation of it; he won in 1829 the University medal for his poem "Timbuctoo," and the next year he published *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical*, which led discriminating critics to speak of him as an altogether promising poet. During these years at the University Tennyson spent, in company with Arthur Hallam, a summer in Spain; this was a romantic journey, the avowed purpose of it being to aid the revolutionists in their uprising against King Ferdinand. The benefit of these travels to Tennyson was twofold: a lasting impression of the grand scenery of the Pyrenees and the wild beauty of the streams, which later added to the setting and music of his lines; and a deeper friendship between himself and Hallam. Tennyson left Cambridge in 1831.

The next six years were spent at Somersby, where in the quietude of a somewhat remote region not far from the shores of the North Sea the young poet walked, read, meditated, and wrote. He made occasional visits in London to his friend Hallam, who was now engaged to Emily Tennyson, the poet's sister. Another volume of poems had appeared in 1832, praised by many, but more or less severely dealt with by the reviewers. The magazine criticism somewhat chilled Tennyson's poetic vein, and for a while he seems actually to have thought of writing no more; the sudden death in Vienna of Arthur Hallam in 1833 further depressed him, and for some years he wrote little. In 1837 the family moved to a place not far from London, and this meant that he would visit the city oftener and meet more intimately the literary men of the capital. Under the encouraging appreciation of these men, he felt less keenly the melancholy which was partly temperamental with him, partly due at this time to the loss of Hallam, and in part the result of poverty. In 1842 he published other poems, and henceforth his success seemed assured; but in 1844 he had invested a little money received from the sale of a small estate in Lincolnshire in a wood-carving enterprise and had lost it all. His health failed, a severe attack of hypochondria followed, and only the sympathies of his friends and the granting of a pension in 1845 by the government brought him back to sounder physical and mental health.

The year 1850 marks a crisis in Tennyson's life: that year he was married to Miss Emily Sellwood, to whom he had long been engaged, he was appointed



ALFRED TENNYSON

Poet Laureate, succeeding Wordsworth, and he published *In Memoriam.* From now on to the end of his long life he was the prince of living English poets; his poems and plays appeared in steady succession and were hailed with national acclaim. The sale of his works was sufficiently large to enable him to buy a handsome estate at Farringford in the Isle of Wight and another a few years later at Aldworth in Surrey; part of the year he spent at each. Hither, as his fame grew, came pilgrims from his own and other lands.

The Prince Consort's admiration for the poet brought invitations to visit the queen and himself at Windsor, where he was ever a welcome guest. Honors of various kinds came to him: the University of Oxford conferred an honorary degree upon him, Cambridge made him an Honorary Fellow of Trinity College, and in 1884 Gladstone induced him to accept a peerage, already twice declined, whereby he became Lord Tennyson. He was happy in his marriage; the last great grief of his life was the loss of his younger son Lionel by drowning on the homeward voyage from India. Old in years and rich in renown, Tennyson died at Aldworth in October, 1892, his hand resting on an open volume of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline.* A week later he was buried with stately ceremonial in Westminster Abbey by the side of his friend and fellow-poet, Robert Browning.

His Personality.—Tennyson looked the poet and lived the poet. The most famous description of him is Carlyle's: "One of the finest looking men in the world. A great shock of rough dusky dark hair; bright laughing hazel eyes; massive aquiline face, most massive yet most delicate; of sallow brown complexion, almost Indian looking, clothes cynically loose, free and easy, smokes infinite tobacco. His voice is musical, metallic, fit for loud laughter and piercing wail, and all that may lie between; speech and speculation free and plenteous; I do not meet in these late decades such company over a pipe." Much has been written about Tennyson's wonderful talk, his fondness for reading aloud his own poetry in that deep, rolling, sonorous voice of his, his sensitiveness to criticism, and his detestation of hero hunters who, through curiosity, came in troops to Aldworth or Farringford, American tourists being the chief offenders. Of Tennyson's conversation, his friend Captain W. Gordon McCabe, of Richmond, Virginia, says: "Tennyson's talk was far and away the best and the most enjoyable I ever listened to, with its dry humor, shading off suddenly

into vehement earnestness; its felicity of epithet, that at times flashed out like a searchlight, and lighted up the whole subject of discussion; its underlying vein of robust common-sense; its wealth of apt quotation and charming reminiscence."[1] And the same authority mentions Tennyson's "direct honesty and simplicity in things small and great" as his salient characteristic.

The Works of Tennyson: Fourfold Classification.—For the sake of clearness, even at the sacrifice of perfect accuracy, it is best to make a fourfold division of Tennyson's poetry based chiefly on subject matter and length of poems, with some regard to the order of time. In general it may be said that most of the independent shorter poems belong to the earlier and latest years of his life, the longer poems to the middle years, say from 1847 (the date of *The Princess*) to about 1875, though most of the dramas belong to the later years. The suggested fourfold division[2] is something like this: (1) Poems essentially **lyric** and **pictorial,** including such representative pieces as the songs from *The Princess,* the "Lotos Eaters," "A Dream of Fair Women," "Lady of Shalott," "Charge of the Light Brigade," "Œnone," "Ulysses," "Locksley Hall," "Maud," "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,"[5] and "Crossing the Bar"; (2) Poems **narrative,** or **epic,** such as *The Princess* and *Idylls of the King*; (3) Poems **philosophic** and more or less **autobiographical,** like "The Palace of Art," "Vision of Sin," "Ancient Sage," and *In Memoriam*; (4) The **dramas.**

Tennyson's distinction as a poet was not generally acknowledged until 1842, when an enlarged edition of his poems appeared. The very early work had been over sweet, lacking in human interest, abounding in prettiness of sentiment and minor melodies; but in such perfect poems as "Ulysses," "Break, Break, Break," "Œnone," and the songs in *The Princess,* a deeper note was struck. Perhaps the most striking thing about these shorter poems, earlier and later, is the harmony between the mood and the

[1] "Personal Recollections of Tennyson," W. Gordon McCabe, *Century Magazine,* March, 1902.

[2] This division, while not identical with that in Dr. Van Dyke's *Poems of Tennyson,* has at least been suggested by that excellent work.

expression. How fully this is true in the songs from *The Princess*—"Tears, Idle Tears," "The Bugle Song," "Sweet and Low,"—and in "Crossing the Bar"—that poem which Tennyson desired to be put at the end of his works, his swan song—is attested by their universal popularity, whether sung or spoken. In the matter of patriotic expression, certainly no utterance of English poet has sounded a clearer note than the great ode in honor of Wellington; while "Ulysses" is a trumpet call to courageous action and the pursuit of knowledge—

> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

The Princess. *The Princess*, Tennyson's first long poem, is a sort of mock-heroic epic on the intellectual emancipation of woman, a subject in which Tennyson and others were at this time much interested. The poem has as its subtitle *A Medley*, and this saves it from being taken too seriously; for it is a mixture of the humorous and the tragic, the true and the burlesque:

> The Princess Ida, betrothed in childhood to the Prince, disregards the contract when she comes to woman's estate and sets up a college in which women shall be educated wholly apart from men. The Prince and several companions disguise themselves as women and enter the sacred precincts, but are soon discovered and ignominiously thrust forth. Then the Prince's father besieges the college with an army, against which the Princess' big brothers rally an opposing force; it is finally decided to settle the dispute by a combat of fifty on each side. The Prince's side is defeated and he, with many others, is wounded. The college is turned into a hospital, the girls sent home, and the wounded brought in and cared for. The Princess nurses the Prince, reads to him; and thus it gradually comes about that the natural emotions get the better of theories, and Love wins.

The exquisite songs warm and color the chilly current of the story and help to melt the heroine's heart. Woman's cause and man's, Tennyson concludes, are the same, and she, though essentially different in nature, is his equal and therefore deserving of equal intellectual and social privileges. The real heroine of the poem is a little child, whose presence symbolizes the "child-like in the larger mind," and so keeps alive the primal instincts.

Maud. *Maud* (1855) is a monodrama containing some rarely beautiful verse reflecting the various moods of a morbid young man in love, from despair to rapture, and then to deeper despair, then to madness, then back to life and hope through the curative virtue of patriotism. The lyrics in *Maud* are among the most musical in Tennyson, though at times the lines seem overloaded with decoration. The rising and falling of the emotion brings into play with remarkable effect all the lyrical chords; the different phases of passion in one person, Tennyson said, "take the place of different characters." For reading aloud, *Maud* was a favorite with the poet.

Idylls of the King. The Arthurian legends have always made a strong appeal to poets and prose romancers; we have seen how that worthy knight, Sir Thomas Malory, in the fifteenth century collected, rearranged, and, in some cases, retouched the stories about Arthur and his knights, making them more accessible and more real to English readers. This old book of Malory's, *Morte D'Arthur*, fell into Tennyson's hands when he was a boy and fascinated him as it still does every imaginative youth who is lucky enough to get hold of it. Two centuries earlier Milton had resolved to write an epic on King Arthur, but the Puritan instinct in him triumphed and he turned to a more distinctly religious subject; Tennyson likewise purposed writing an epic or drama on King Arthur, and gave himself twenty years in which to accomplish it. He gradually modified his plan, however, and the *Idylls of the King*—a series of twelve great poems forming a cycle, pictorial in method but epic in spirit—was the result. This vast cycle was slowly put together: from the first sketches, faint foreshadowings of the *Idylls* proper—"The Lady of Shalott" (1832), "Sir Galahad," "Sir Launcelot and Queen Guinevere"—to the completion of the series in 1888, over fifty years intervened.

In its completed form the *Idylls of the King* is a vast allegory "shadowing sense at war with Soul." Symbolically considered, the several *Idylls* cover a year, the four seasons being faintly reflected in the coloring of the poem. The king first appears on the night of the New Year; his marriage to Guinevere is in the

spring; early summer is in "Gareth and Lynette," and full-blown summer in "Launcelot and Elaine"; early fall with its equinoctial storms is in the "Holy Grail"; then the falling leaves of late autumn harmonize with the waning fortunes of the kingdom in the "Last Tournament." Finally, the mists of winter wrap the landscape in "Guinevere," and deep winter holds the earth in the "Passing of Arthur" on the last day of the old year. Of all the *Idylls* Tennyson's favorite was "Guinevere," which is, indeed, the richest and most modern in psychology. The guilty queen, whose sin had ruined a kingdom, is at last herself redeemed by love. The epic cycle ends in hope:

> Then slowly answered Arthur from the barge:
> The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
> And God fulfills himself in many ways,
> Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.

Scattered through the *Idylls* are some of the finest lines in nineteenth-century poetry; such, for instance, as these:

> For manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of loyal nature and of noble mind.
>
> Mockery is the fume of little hearts.
>
> All in a death-dumb, autumn-dripping gloom.
>
> A low sea-sunset glorying round her hair.
>
> He makes no friend who never made a foe.
>
> His honour rooted in dishonour stood,
> And faith unfaithful kept him falsely true.
>
> Our hoard is little, but our hearts are great.

In Memoriam. Tennyson's *In Memoriam* (1850) belongs to that noble group of elegies, of which Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais" are shining examples; but in breadth and depth of interest, *In Memoriam* surpasses all the rest. In 1833, as already mentioned, Tennyson's intimate friend Arthur Henry Hallam died suddenly in Vienna, while on a continental journey

with his father, the distinguished historian. Out of this great sorrow slowly grew the series of one hundred and thirty-one lyrics collectively known as *In Memoriam*. These lyrics were not written in any definite order: "The sections," says Tennyson, "were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many." In the poem itself the lyrics are spoken of as—

> Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
> Their wings in tears and skim away.

In Memoriam thus represents a period of occasional composition extending over seventeen years (1833–1850); the time covered by the events in the poem is three years, including three Christmases as centers of three cycles of verse, the whole, according to Tennyson, being divided in its final form into nine sections. To the poem proper was prefixed in 1849 the Prologue, a prayer addressed to the "Strong Son of God, Immortal Love," and summing up the philosophic and religious meaning of the whole; the poem closes with an Epilogue, a sort of Epithalamium, or marriage hymn, celebrating the marriage of Tennyson's younger sister Cecilia (not the one betrothed to Hallam) to Professor Lushington.

In Memoriam begins with a despairing mood, then passes into one of combat or struggle against doubt, and ends in the triumph of faith, though it is withal a somewhat saddened resolve to trust—

> With faith that comes of self-control,
> The truths that never can be proved
> Until we close with all we loved,
> And all we flow from, soul in soul.

In regard to the personal and general application of the poem Tennyson remarked to a friend: "It is rather the cry of the whole human race than mine. In the poem altogether private grief swells out into the thought of, and hope for, the whole world. It begins with a funeral and ends with a marriage—begins with death and ends in promise of a new life—a sort of Divine Comedy,

cheerful at the close." The central theme of *In Memoriam* is the immortality of Love; from the gloom of sorrow and the benumbing chill of doubt the poet has slowly and painfully struggled up to light and "the larger hope." More than any other longer poem of the century *In Memoriam* reflects the spiritual unrest of the age. Tennyson's answer to the questionings of the spirit out of his own experience and intuition gave comfort to multitudes of troubled men and women. This, together with the perfect music of the verse, has made *In Memoriam* widely popular.

The Dramas. Besides the large body of varied verse for which Tennyson is known and loved in all English-speaking lands, he wrote seven plays, which, it must be said, have added little to his fame. These dramas are not without strong situations and noble lines, but they seem cold and remote as compared with the warmth and modernness of his other poetry; they lack action, humor, and attachment to the life of his time. The truth is, Tennyson was wanting in that dramatic power which is necessary to the vivid portrayal of individual character in a play; he had, moreover, no practical training in stage-craft. In spite of these limitations, however, several of his plays were, in the hands of competent actors, well received for a time at least; this was particularly true of *Becket*, one of his historical dramas, which was acted with good effect by Sir Henry Irving. They are in reality closet dramas, more adapted to reading than to acting. The most noteworthy of the dramas are *Queen Mary* (1875), *Harold* (1876), *Becket* (1884)—an English historical trilogy—and *The Foresters* (1892).

Literary Characteristics and Teaching.—In temperament Tennyson was aristocratic and thoroughly English; both his choice of subjects and his treatment of them show this. He preferred classic, mediaeval, "old, forgotten, far-off things," touched with romance; and he Anglicized them all. He was preëminently a national poet. When it comes to an aesthetic appreciation of Tennyson, the first and last thing to be said of him is that he was supremely artistic and that he consecrated himself to his art with unfaltering devotion. The most obvious characteristics of his

verse are harmony and beauty; it wins its way to the ear by its perfect harmony, and then to the imagination by its pictorial quality. It has the harmony and the beauty of flawless craftsmanship, but it has substance also: the intellectual, social, and religious ferment of the age is felt in Tennyson's poetry.

Tennyson was, moreover, a close observer of nature, and he could put into words as no other one of our poets has done that indefinable emotion which comes to every delicately sensitive soul, a sort of dreamy and not unpleasing melancholy, out of the haze of an autumn landscape or the freshness of spring time or the luscious ripeness of summer. He colored his poetry with the romantic atmosphere of sea, sunset, moonrise, misty field and forest, as Turner did his canvas with the impalpable splendors of nature in her varied moods. Tennyson could also portray the simple beauty of the English countryside with realistic effect: the languorous music and the drowsy atmosphere of the "Lotos Eaters" is almost oriental, while the homely simplicity of "Dora," "Enoch Arden," and parts of the "May Queen," shows the love of rustic life.

Tennyson is a great teacher as well as a great poet. No one can read such poems as "The Palace of Art," "The Two Voices," "The Vision of Sin," and "The Ancient Sage," without receiving a decided moral and spiritual uplift. The imperative necessity for social service, if one would attain to fulness of life; the duty of following "the gleam," if one would, like Galahad, catch a vision of perfection; the inward protest of a spiritual nature against the deadening tendencies of a rampant materialism; the recognition of the cancerous workings of individual and social sins; and, above all, the inspiriting power of faith that has been struggled for and at last attained by "cleaving ever to the sunnier side of doubt"—these are some of the teachings, direct or indirect, contained in his poetry. One strain runs through his work clear as a flute note—the sovereign sense of law and love in the world, and the consequent obligation of men to live well-ordered lives, reverencing the past and conserving what is best in it, facing the future hopefully and helpfully—

Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three lead life to sovereign power.
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear;
And because right is right, to follow right
Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.

ROBERT BROWNING (1812-1889)

His Life.—Robert Browning, who ranks along with Tennyson among the Victorian poets, was born in Camberwell, a suburb of London, in 1812. His father, a clerk in the Bank of England, was a man of literary tastes and broad culture who loved books and art more than banking, though he made a success of his business. Browning's mother was a woman of artistic and religious sensibilities, fond of music, and in full sympathy with her son's poetic impulses. From both parents, indeed, the young poet received steady encouragement, but to his mother he was in temperament more closely akin. As the Brownings were Dissenters, Robert did not attend either of the great English universities; he studied at home under a tutor, read widely in his father's large library, went to a private school several years and to London University for a short while, and spent a great deal of time in the British Museum. To his father, to the intellectual and artistic atmosphere of the home, and to his own omnivorous reading, Browning owed most of his education. By the time he was twelve he had written a large number of verses in the manner of Byron; a little later he became an ardent admirer of Shelley, a volume of whose poetry had come into his hands. He spent several months traveling in Russia, thought of preparing himself to enter the diplomatic service, returned to England and in 1835 brought out his first considerable work, *Paracelsus*. With the publication of this poem his career may be said to have begun, for it gained him recognition from prominent literary men.

The next ten years of Browning's life were outwardly uneventful: he was writing plays and poems, but they did not bring him a fame which could be called national, nor did they fill his purse. In response to a request from Macready for a play, he wrote in 1837 *Strafford*, which was produced with some success. Other dramas followed, none of which, however, proved to be well adapted to the stage, though "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" was received with considerable favor. Meanwhile Browning had visited Italy, the land which was to be his second home, and there prepared himself for writing his long, and to most readers, obscure poem, *Sordello*. In 1844 he met for the first time Miss Elizabeth Barrett, herself a much more famous poet at this time than Browning. In one of her poems Miss Barrett had

ROBERT BROWNING AS A YOUNG MAN

paid a graceful compliment to Browning's poetry; he wrote thanking her and expressing admiration for her work. This led to a visit from him; a correspondence followed and other visits; for two years the letters and occasional calls continued. For a long time Miss Barrett had been an invalid confined to her room, the pet of an indulgent but selfish father; but the letters and conversations of the accomplished young poet brought variety and cheer into the secluded life of the invalid, with the result that she grew stronger and in 1846 agreed to marry him. As her father forbade the match, the lovers took matters into their own hands and were secretly married, after which they fled to Italy. With the exception of prolonged stays in Paris and several summers spent in England, the Brownings passed the fifteen years of their married life in Italy, mostly at Florence in the house Casa Guidi, known to readers of Mrs. Browning's poems.

The happiness of those Italian years was rudely broken by the death of Mrs. Browning in 1861, and for a while Browning lost interest in his work and in the life about him. It had been a perfect union of congenial spirits; their home in the old city on the Arno was an ideal one for two poets to whom the literary associations and art treasures of Florence meant so

much. Gradually Browning recovered from his depression and for comfort turned to completing his great poem, *The Ring and the Book*, and to the education of their only child, Robert Barrett Browning.

Returning to England to live, Browning came to be as the years went on a familiar figure in London society, for which his brilliant conversational powers and his interest in people peculiarly fitted him. By this time, too, he was getting a long delayed recognition from an increasing circle of cultured readers. Of independent fortune, he had cared comparatively little about the popularity of his poetry as measured by the financial success of his volumes, content to await the approval of competent critics. It is pleasing to note that America was quicker to recognize Browning's genius than England, even as it had Carlyle's. Browning's son had become an artist and was now living in Venice; at his house on the Grand Canal, the Palazzo Rezzonico, the poet died in 1889, and as England claimed his body, he was buried in Westminster Abbey. Upon the house in which he died the Venetians, grateful for his love of their country, put a memorial tablet with these lines of his:

> Open my heart and you will see
> Graved inside of it 'Italy.'

His Personality.—Browning was always interested in human beings about him, and his mental curiosity was acute. Tennyson was something of a recluse; Browning loved society and was ever a welcome guest at teas and receptions. From his mother he had inherited an extreme sensibility which showed itself in his love of music, his deep religious feeling, and his almost feminine tenderness. His good health and his freedom from anxiety about money matters—he enjoyed a comfortable fortune by inheritance—helped to make him an optimist. Around him both in Italy and in England were gathered many congenial friends; to him from Oxford, Cambridge, and Edinburgh, came honorary degrees; and as time went on, praise almost fulsome was given him by numerous Browning societies, with whose members admiration for his poetry had grown into a cult. Browning was generally amused when an enthusiastic feminine worshiper would ask the meaning of some obscure passage, and with a wise smile and an inscrutable look he usually declined to enlighten her. His married life, as already indicated, was itself a poem. Healthy, buoyant,

virile and yet gentle, Browning richly deserves the tribute of his friend, Walter Savage Landor:

> No man has walked along our roads with step
> So active, so enquiring eye, or tongue
> So varied in discourse.

His Works.—For the sake of convenience we may divide Browning's poetry into three classes—Dramatic Lyrics, Dramatic Monologues, and Dramas Proper. All his work, whether it be lyric in form (as his short earlier pieces) or epic (as his masterpiece, *The Ring and the Book*), is essentially dramatic in spirit. Of the **Dramatic Lyrics** a few of the best known are: "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix," "The Lost Leader," "Evelyn Hope," "A Toccata of Galuppi's," and "Saul." Of the **Dramatic Monologues,** the following are the most famous: "My Last Duchess," "The Last Ride Together," "Andrea Del Sarto," "The Bishop Orders his Tomb," "The Grammarian's Funeral," "Fra Lippo Lippi," "An Epistle of Karshish," "Cleon," "Abt Vogler," "A Death in the Desert," "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came," and "Caliban upon Setebos." The **Dramas Proper** are *Strafford, King Victor and King Charles, The Return of the Druses, A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, Colombe's Birthday, Luria,* and *A Soul's Tragedy* (all written between 1837 and 1846). *Pippa Passes* (1841) is a long lyric and dramatic poem; *Paracelsus* (1835) and *Sordello* (1840) are prolonged dramatic monologues; the longest of Browning's poems, *The Ring and the Book* (1868), is a series of monologues. The poet called the collection of poems published between 1841 and 1846 *Bells and Pomegranates,*[1] and that of 1855, *Men and Women.* Though he continued writing up to his death in 1889—his volume of poems named *Asolando* appearing that very year—Browning's best work was done by 1868.

[1] Browning thus explained this title: "I meant by the title to indicate an endeavour towards something like an alternation, or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought."—See Exodus, xxviii, 33-34.

The Dramatic Monologue.—The poetic form, known as the dramatic monologue, Browning used with brilliant success. Indeed, he may be called the originator and perfecter of this form. A dramatic monologue, as employed by Browning, is a speech by one person to another, so presented that the reader may infer what the reply or action of the person addressed is. The attitude of the reader of a monologue somewhat resembles that of a listener to a person talking over the telephone: the conversation of the man or woman at the other end may be guessed at by the listener. Thus, in "My Last Duchess" a proud and selfish duke is represented as showing to an envoy, sent by a great nobleman to arrange for the marriage of his daughter to the duke, the picture of the duke's last wife. From the duke's comments on the character of the dead duchess we gain a clear insight into the duke's own selfishness, the unselfish nature of the duchess, and the desire of the duke—delicately hinted to the envoy—that the new duchess, besides having a liberal dowry, should take warning from the fate of her predecessor. In "Andrea Del Sarto" the great Italian artist by that name is talking to his beautiful but shallow wife, Lucrezia; we gather from what Andrea says that certain failures in his own career have been largely due to lack of sympathy on his wife's part and to her personal vanity. We also infer her replies and actions during the conversation. In "The Bishop Orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church," an old bishop of the Italian Renaissance period, on his deathbed, is directing his sons in regard to the handsome tomb he wants built for him; and in so doing he reveals his jealousy against a brother bishop, who has a finer monument, and his love of luxury. The poem conveys the sensuous atmosphere of the Renaissance in its worship of art and learning.

The monologues of Browning are exquisite pieces of art, intellectually clever and stimulating to the imagination. They have proved the most popular of his poems; but they demand of the reader alertness of mind and an unfettered fancy, if he would really enjoy them. Once understood, they invite repeated readings; there is no other poetic form so packed with thought and

suggestion. The dramatic monologue is an intensive character-study; it is a condensed drama. Some of these monologues have a lyric tone, so musical is the setting. "Saul," for instance, represents the young David playing and singing before King Saul until the evil spirit leaves the monarch. The shepherd musician, in an access of devotion, has a prophetic vision of the Christ, the outgrowth of the spiritual discovery that in God's universe "all's love, yet all's law." In "Abt Vogler" the musician, playing on the instrument of his invention, builds up in his imagination a wonderful palace of music in which he communes with unseen presences of all ages. Under the spell which music has cast over him, he exclaims:

> There never shall be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
> The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
> What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
> On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven a perfect round.

Our intuitions, our dreams of perfection, our inarticulate emotions in hearing great music, are evidences of the realities toward which we aspire and which we shall some day see. Thus Browning, in common with Tennyson, finds in "the lyric cry" of intuition an earnest of immortality. The student should patiently read the dramatic monologues, even if he neglects all the rest of Browning, for in them he is at his best.

The Dramas Proper.—Browning wrote eight or nine dramas, some of which are simply dramatic poems cast in play form. *Pippa Passes,* for instance, is a beautiful dramatic idyl arranged in four scenes through which Pippa, the little silk-weaver of Asolo, runs like a golden thread. The theme of this poem is the unconscious influence of a radiant little girl upon certain individuals who hear her joyous and hopeful song one holiday as she passes by them. The redeeming power of youth and purity is illustrated in the poem. Several of Browning's plays have been acted—notably, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon, Colombe's Birthday, In a Balcony,* and *Strafford,* the historical drama—but with indifferent success.

"A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," in particular, has several striking situations which suit the stage; as a rule, however, the plays read better than they act. They are too inward, made up of long speeches dealing in argument or subtle exposition, lacking in action, and therefore better adapted to thoughtful, cultivated readers than to a popular audience. The action takes place in the minds of the characters; it is a movement of brain cells rather than of bodies on a stage. Being fond of spiritual themes, Browning analyzes and philosophizes instead of developing plot and character through action. These dramas contain stretches of glorious poetry, and may be read again and again with increasing delight.

The Ring and the Book.—*The Ring and the Book*, finished in 1868, is a poem of twenty thousand lines in twelve books, consisting of a series of monologues on a central theme. The work as a whole is in epic form and is twice as long as *Paradise Lost*. One day on a bookstall in Florence, Browning found an old yellow book, or pamphlet, containing an account of a famous trial at Rome in 1698 of one Count Guido for the murder of his young wife, Pompilia. From the evidence brought out at the trial Browning made his long poem, weaving it into a great "ring," by mixing the fine gold of his fancy with the crude ore of fact. The same story is told nine different times representing nine separate points of view; and so well does the poet manage the narrations that one does not weary at the repetition. The central figure of it all is Pompilia, the child wife of Guido, whom her husband in a fit of unfounded jealousy mortally wounds; before her death she recounts the pathetic story of her brief life. Pompilia is Browning's finest heroine; over against the blackness of her husband's guilty soul her own spirit shines like a star in the darkest night. Among the men the figure of the Pope, who pronounces judgment on Guido, looms large and impressive.

Browning's Characteristics.—To reveal the workings of the human soul at crucial moments, to cause a man or woman to reflect in speech the changes, the growth, the decay, of ideals—that, in a sentence, is what Browning does in his poetry. That is

to say, he deals metaphysically and dramatically with his subject. He loves to choose a little incident, an insignificant situation, a glance, a chance meeting, and develop it into a crisis in a life. He believes in crucial moments. He is less of an artist than Tennyson and less national in spirit; but he is more original, more vigorous than Tennyson. As already intimated, Browning prefers Italian scenes and themes, though he treats them with the moral passion of a Puritan. He thinks like lightning, and accordingly he takes quick leaps; he assumes intellect in his readers; his method is dynamic. He did not mean that his poetry should be read after a full meal to promote digestion; it is rather a tonic to be taken before meals. Undoubtedly, in order to appreciate Browning in his long flights both mental alertness and considerable culture are necessary: he does not "descend to meet," but compliments his reader by taxing his brain.

Too much has been made of Browning's obscurity: he leaves gaps for you to fill in; makes you, as it were, a partner in his act of creation, dramatically assuming that you are present at a given scene; he leaves out relative pronouns and other particles in his headlong thinking. But one will soon get used to this and feel after a while the exhilaration of thinking the poet's thought along with him. One should begin with certain of the short dramatic lyrics already mentioned, such as "Evelyn Hope," visualizing the scene and so following the action; then, "My Last Duchess" and the longer monologues will unfold themselves easily. Once used to this energizing poetry, the reader will no more weary of Browning than he would of Shakespeare. The earliest and latest of his writing is his obscurest, and much of this the beginner would do well to omit.

Browning's Message.—Browning is more burdened with a message than any other Victorian poet. Like Tennyson, he values love as the greatest thing in the world; unlike Tennyson, he subordinates law to the individual will. Browning arouses the will to action as with a clarion call to battle in such lines as these, which every youth should memorize and often repeat:

Then, welcome each rebuff
That turns earth's smoothness rough,
Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
Be our joys three parts pain!
Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never
grudge the throe!

Moreover, he values effort more than attainment, and even out of apparent failure he creates a hope. "What's come to perfection perishes," he declares, holding that aspiration, not contentment, is the proper attitude of mind:

Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp,
Or what's a heaven for?

His courage, faith, and buoyant optimism leave no room for doubt in his soul. "Steeped to the finger-tips in radiant hope," Browning held that the purpose of living is growth through spiritual evolution, and the gist of his message may be found in his own words:

I count life just a stuff
To try the soul's strength on, educe the man.
Who keeps one end in view makes all things serve
As with the body—he who hurls a lance
Or heaps up stone on stone, shows strength alike;
So must I seize and task all means to prove
And show this soul of mine.

The last year of his life Browning wrote the following lines, which we may fitly regard as a summary of his own life and teaching:

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break,
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph,
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING (1806-1861)

Her Life.—By general consent Mrs. Browning holds first place among the poetesses of England. Elizabeth Barrett was born near Durham in 1806, daughter of a country gentleman. Her girlhood was spent in Herefordshire

among the Malvern Hills; at the age of fifteen she injured her spine while out horseback-riding, from the results of which she never fully recovered. The family moved to London in 1835, where she lived as an invalid in her father's house until her marriage to Robert Browning in 1846. Educated at home, Miss Barrett early showed great proficiency in Greek, acquiring a deep and varied culture. Mention has already been made of her meeting with Browning and her secret marriage, due to her father's selfish opposition; he did not, indeed, wish any of his children to marry, and never forgave his poet-daughter. The last fifteen years of Mrs. Browning's life were spent happily in Florence, where she lies buried in the Protestant cemetery.

Her Works.—Miss Barrett was famous as a poet long before her future husband was widely known, her first important poems appearing in 1838; in 1844 a collected edition of her poems was published, which fully established her reputation. Mrs. Browning's strongest work was inspired by social problems, chiefly the Italian struggle for liberty and child labor, and by love. *Casa Guidi Windows* (1851), named after the Brownings' home in Florence, is a plea for Italian independence and unity, which was to be realized in 1870; *The Cry of the Children* is a protest against the employment of young children in factories; *Aurora Leigh* (1856), Mrs. Browning's longest work, is a novel in verse, the hero of which is a young social reformer; the heroine is strongly suggestive of Mrs. Browning herself. As time goes on, however, it is coming to be felt that the greatest work of this beautiful and sensitive soul is to be found in *Sonnets from the Portuguese* (1850), a series of exquisite love-poems celebrating the perfect union of herself and Robert Browning. Though written during the months of their courtship, she did not show them to her husband until sometime after their marriage; and when she did publish them, she half-disclaimed responsibility by her choice of a title. The first, and one of the most lovely, of the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* is this:

I thought once how Theocritus had sung
Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
Who each one in a gracious hand appears
To bear a gift for mortals, old or young:

And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
I saw, in gradual vision through my tears,
The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
So weeping, how a mystic Shape did move
Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,—
"Guess now who holds thee?" "Death," I said. But there
The silver answer rang,—"Not Death, but Love."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882).—Mention was made in connection with Ruskin of that little group of artists and poets known as the "Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood."[1] Prominent among these was Rossetti, poet and artist, who was born in London in 1828, son of an Italian exile. He early showed a decided talent for painting; indeed, he long hesitated between poetry and painting in the choice of his life work, and ended by putting much of the coloring of the canvas into his poetry. Among his youthful poems is "The Blessed Damozel," on which, in the popular mind, his fame chiefly rests. There was something original, not to say bold, in the idea that a beautiful woman, still possessing the fascination of fleshly charm, should be leaning over "the gold bar of heaven," wistfully awaiting her earthly lover. It was a curious mixture of "worldliness" and "other-worldliness," to be sure; but it made a delicately sensuous appeal to those who loved the rich coloring of the madonnas and other pictures in the mediaeval church. In 1860 Rossetti married a lovely English girl who had much of the ethereal beauty of his own poetic women; in two years she died, and in his despairing grief he buried with her a manuscript of poems. In 1870, at the urgent solicitation of his friends, the little volume was taken from her grave and published; but Rossetti never fully recovered from the shock of his wife's death.

[1]The professed aim of these young enthusiasts was to deal with remote subjects of art in a pure, less conventional manner than, in their opinion, had prevailed since Raphael. They wished to return to the Pre-Raphaelite simplicity or realism.

He wrote many other poems of a ballad nature, such as "A Last Confession," "Sister Helen," and "Rose Mary," full of mystic beauty. The languorous loveliness of his women is the same that we see in the paintings of his brother artists, Holman Hunt and Burne-Jones. Never before had there been such a mingling of palette and poetry. The greatest, as well as the longest, achievement of Rossetti is his series of one hundred and one sonnets called *The House of Life*, all perfect in finish and in melody. They form with Shakespeare's and Mrs. Browning's cycles the third notable sonnet-series in our literature.

Rossetti's sister, CHRISTINA ROSSETTI, was hardly less gifted as a poet than her brother, and deserves to rank along with Mrs. Browning in lyric genius.

William Morris (1834–1896).—Another Pre-Raphaelite, a friend and in a sense a disciple of Rossetti, is William Morris, poet, artist, and socialist. Morris was educated at Oxford, where he became interested in mediaeval art and literature. Fortunately, he had wealth, and so was able to indulge his taste for art and his passion for reform. He embraced the social program of Carlyle and Ruskin, but he had more practical ability than either of these. In 1860 Morris organized a company for house and church decoration, and managed the enterprise with such conspicuous success that he profoundly influenced the public taste of his time. The tone of decorative art in England was vastly improved; beautiful furniture, rugs, stained-glass windows, curtains, and mural painting, are some of the results of Morris's crusade. He became an active socialist of the aesthetic type; he vigorously worked to make the world of the workingman more interesting and more picturesque, and to counteract, by spreading the gospel of beauty, the deadening commercialism of the time. Six years before his death Morris established the Kelmscott Press, from which he sent forth books printed in type and bound in decorations of his own artistic designing.

William Morris wrote a large amount of poetry on mediaeval and classic themes, treated in a romantic way. *The Defence of*

Queen Guenevere (1858) deals with the old Arthurian material in a quaintly colored style, with its long swinging meter, but it lacks the human interest of Tennyson's handling of the same matter. In *The Life and Death of Jason* (1867) Morris works over the old Greek legend. *The Earthly Paradise* (1868–1870)—a sort of romantic *Canterbury Tales*, in which twenty-four ancient and mediaeval stories are strung together—is perhaps his greatest work. It is a land of enchantment to which we are introduced by this "singer of an empty day,"—as Morris calls himself—far removed from the storm and stress of our real world. But even in this golden paradise we catch an echo of human conflict, which the poet would fain forget, but cannot. *Sigurd the Volsung* (1876) is an epic poem on the old Icelandic legends, of which Morris was an enthusiastic student. The poetry of William Morris has no purposefulness, being singularly remote from life. He loved beauty, as Keats did, for beauty's sake:

> Dreamer of dreams, born out of my due time,
> Why should I strive to set the crooked straight?
> Let it suffice me that my murmuring rhyme
> Beats with light wings against the ivory gate,
> Telling a tale not too importunate
> To those who in the sleepy region stay,
> Lulled by the singer of an empty day.

Charles Algernon Swinburne (1837–1909).—Born the same year in which Queen Victoria came to the throne, Swinburne lived through her long reign and almost through the reign of Edward VII, dying in 1909. He was educated at Eton and at Balliol College, Oxford, and spent his life in or near London as a devoted man of letters. But for his liberal opinions on politics and religion, Swinburne would doubtless have succeeded Tennyson as Poet Laureate; certainly since the death of Tennyson he has been the foremost English poet, though never close to the heart of the nation. He is the last of the Pre-Raphaelite poets, but different from the others in that he gave himself exclusively to literature. He, with the rest of that brotherhood, owed much to

the great romantic poets Blake, Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats, carrying on their traditions in the worship of pure beauty.

Swinburne's voluminous works fall into three general divisions—Dramas, Lyrics, and Literary Criticism. His first considerable work was *Atalanta in Calydon* (1865), a play modeled upon the Greek drama, dedicated to the memory of Walter Savage Landor, whom Swinburne ardently admired. This drama exhibits the color and metrical harmony of which Swinburne is a master: the choral odes are exceedingly beautiful. Although he wrote nine or ten other dramas—among them a trilogy on Mary, Queen of Scots,—it is doubtful whether he ever surpassed his first great effort. In 1866 the volume called *Poems and Ballads* came out and created a sensation: many censured the author for the pagan tone of certain poems and for the sensual suggestion of others; more praised the poet for his marvelous metrical effects and his verbal melody. The over-sensuous atmosphere of some of this earlier poetry was tempered in his maturer work, but many of these pieces represent the poet at his best, for he is essentially lyric.

Swinburne is most delightful as the poet of nature and of childhood: he casts over the reader the spell of the sea, of the mountains, of the woods, of the stars, with a mystic charm that comes from the long and deep communion with the varying moods of nature. The innocence and the beauty of childhood shine through certain of his poems, for he loved children, and he rivals Blake in voicing the ineffable charm of childhood. He is not a poet of man in the broad sense; he is too bookish for that. He is, moreover, a wordy poet, with, as Matthew Arnold pointed out, a fatal fluency: ideas are lost in the bewildering and shimmering welter of words. Consequently, as a critic he is intemperate; his prose writings—on Victor Hugo and Shakespeare, for instance—while not without critical acumen, are rhapsodies rather than sane pieces of appreciation. But when it comes to musical lines, high haunting melodies, and the widest metrical range in English literature, Swinburne compels admiration. Take these lines addressed to *Hesperia* (The Western Land, Italy and Spain) as a sample:

From the bountiful infinite west, from the happy memorial places,
Full of the stately repose and the lordly delight of the dead,
Where the fortunate islands are lit with the light of ineffable faces,
And the sound of a sea without wind is about them, and sunset is red,
Come back to redeem and release me from love that recalls and represses,
That cleaves to my flesh as a flame, till the serpent has eaten his fill;
From the bitter delights of the dark, and the feverish, the furtive caresses
That murder the youth in a man or ever his heart have its will.

Other Poets.—A number of minor poets have sung or are singing in this most recent period of our literature. To mention them all would extend the present work too far; besides, the places of some of these poets are not yet fixed, and any attempt at appreciation would be premature.

Matthew Arnold's friend ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH (1819–1861) was, like Arnold, a poet of doubt and disillusion, who wrote some verse of a high order reflecting the spiritual unrest of the mid-nineteenth century. A few of his shorter poems—"Qua Cursum Ventus," "Venit Hesperus," and "Say Not the Struggle Naught Availeth"—have grown in popularity because of their clear lyric quality and hopeful tone. The spirit of Clough's poetry is the same as that of Arnold, but his art is not as fine. It is likely, indeed, that he will be better known to later times through Arnold's elegy, "Thyrsis," than through his own verse.

EDWARD FITZGERALD (1809–1883) is famous because of his admirable translation, or adaptation, of the Persian poem in quatrains, the *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.*

Of more recent poets, we may choose one for a few words of comment. STEPHEN PHILLIPS (1868—) is the author of several poetic dramas of rare sweetness and distinction on ancient and mediaeval themes: *Paolo and Francesca, Ulysses, Nero.* The verse of Phillips at its best is somewhat reminiscent of Milton and Tennyson, and of the lyric moods of the great Elizabethans, all of whom he has diligently studied. His later work has not surpassed the earlier, which in *Marpessa* and other lyric-dramatic poems gave such high hopes of another master singer. The truth is, there is a lull in the progress of poetry. There are many minor

singers, but no great voice is heard. And yet we may confidently predict that in good time other great seers will continue that ministry of poetry, which is so inspiring a part of the glorious heritage of our English-speaking race.

III. THE NOVELISTS

We have already traced the history of the English novel from Richardson through Sir Walter Scott. We have noted the several kinds of novels—domestic, society, romantic or historical; and we have seen that two tendencies run through the history of our prose fiction—the one toward idealism, the other toward realism. By the middle of the nineteenth century the novel had become the most popular form of literature, displacing the drama and causing the old interest in poetry and the essay to weaken. Thus it came about by the end of the century that the term "literature" was almost synonymous with "novel."

The novel, like the drama in the Elizabethan Age, took all life for its province: every kind of human activity came to be reflected in novels and short stories. The writers of novels and short stories, whose name is legion, filled the magazines with their literary wares for the busy reader, the idle reader, and the thoughtful reader. All sorts of problems came to be discussed, abuses exposed, and reforms advocated. Thus there grew up the social-reform novel, the psychological or motive-novel, and other species, adapted in one way or another to our complex modern life.

Since the days of Scott and his historical novels, the three most prominent novelists in English literature have been Dickens, Thackeray, and George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans). Their works have long been classics. Other great writers of prose fiction in the Victorian Era are Meredith, Hardy, Stevenson, and Kipling. Then come a number of minor novelists—Bulwer-Lytton, Trollope, Brontë, Reade, Wilkie Collins, Kingsley, and Blackmore. These we will now consider in order, giving most space to Dickens, Thackeray, Eliot, and Stevenson.

CHARLES DICKENS AS A YOUNG MAN
From the Maclise portrait

CHARLES DICKENS (1812-1870)

His Life.—Charles Dickens was born in 1812 at Portsea, Hampshire, where his father was a clerk in the navy yard. The family moved not long afterward to Chatham, and finally to London, where they settled in a poor quarter of the city. The elder Dickens, of whom Mr. Micawber in *David Copperfield* is a picture, was always in debt; on this account he had to spend some time in the old Marshalsea prison. During these years of deep poverty Charles earned six shillings a week by pasting labels on bottles in a blacking factory. After his father was released from prison, Dickens was sent to school for three years; then, at the age of fifteen, he entered a lawyer's office, and in 1828 he became a newspaper reporter. From his early childhood he was familiar with the London streets, where much of his education was obtained, and from which the material for his future novels was to come.

So well had Dickens succeeded at his vocation, that in a few years he was considered one of the best reporters in the gallery of the House of Commons. Meanwhile he had written certain humorous sketches which were published in the *Monthly Magazine* and the *Chronicle* over the pen name of "Boz." These were followed by a series known to us now as the *Pickwick Papers.* The fame and fortune of the young writer were made; henceforth he gave himself to writing novels. He was in great demand as a reader and lecturer and as a pleader for philanthropic movements all over Great Britain. As he had considerable dramatic ability and had once thought of becoming an actor, he sometimes took part in amateur theatricals with marked success. In 1842 Dickens paid his first visit to America, reading in various cities and being acclaimed as the most popular of literary visitors. Twenty-five years later he came again and was given a royal welcome; his hosts generously forgot his caustic criticisms of American life after his first visit. Worn out by the strain of a wonderfully busy life—really a victim to his own popularity—Dickens died in 1870 at the age of fifty-eight, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

His Personality.—Carlyle's word-picture of Dickens is vivid: "Clear, blue, intelligent eyes, eyebrows that he arches amazingly, large, protrusive, rather loose mouth, a face of most extreme *mobility*, which he shuttles about—eyebrows, eyes, mouth and all—in a very singular manner while speaking * * * *. For the rest, a quiet, shrewd-looking little fellow, who seems to guess pretty well what he is and what others are."

Sympathy, cheerfulness, and courage—these are leading qualities in the personality of Dickens. His love went out to the world,

especially to that submerged world of London out of which he had risen. Their oddities of character he viewed with kindly humor; their sorrows, with a fellow-feeling. Children he loved, and was loved by them in return. Over his characters he laughed and wept as he was creating them. The family often heard explosions of mirth in his room, and knew that he was having a good time with his characters. He was a man of great sensibility; sentiment sometimes got the better of his judgment. He had his little vanities; such, for instance, as a fondness for flashy clothes, a love for theatrical effect, a too feverish ambition. He had immense vitality, and he was, therefore, capable of severe and long-sustained labor. He literally killed himself working for good causes. His great heart, which sorrowed for the oppressed and sympathized with childhood, has made Dickens the most deeply loved personally of all English novelists.

The Novels.—Dickens wrote thirteen or fourteen novels, besides a number of Christmas stories, sketches, travel-notes, and *A Child's History of England.* He was, moreover, during this time editor of two or three papers, among them a popular magazine called *All the Year Round.* His first long book, *Pickwick Papers,* is made up of a series of articles, with comic illustrations, setting forth the adventures of a company of cockney clubmen. The book has over fifty different situations, most of them exceedingly amusing, and about three hundred and fifty characters. *Pickwick Papers* was finished in 1837, when Dickens was twenty-five. It set all London to laughing. The public called for more, and the young author went to work with greater seriousness of purpose to construct more definite plots. His next book, *Oliver Twist* (1838), was a study of life among the criminal class, not simply to entertain but to expose conditions with a view to reform. Other novels followed in rapid succession: *Nicholas Nickleby* (1839), *Old Curiosity Shop* and *Barnaby Rudge* (1841), *Martin Chuzzlewit* (1843), *Dombey and Son* (1848), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), *Hard Times* (1854), *Little Dorrit* (1857), *A Tale of Two Cities* (1859), *The Uncommercial Traveller* and *Great Expectations* (1861), *Our Mutual Friend* (1865), and the

unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood.* Considering the length of a Dickens novel and the author's numerous engagements, this is a surprisingly large output.

Dickens's Philanthropic Purpose.—Aside from mere entertainment and sheer delight in creating plots and characters, Dickens had something of philanthropic and moral purpose in his strongest novels. Hence the name, "humanitarian novel" has been applied to his works. He sought to reveal the poverty and vice of the lowest class of London society, in particular, and to appeal to the conscience of the English public for the relief of the downtrodden and oppressed. Bad laws, indifference, and wilful neglect, he thought, were responsible. *Oliver Twist* is the history of a victim of such conditions as were to be found in the workhouses of the day; *Nicholas Nickleby* exposes the abuses in private schools; *Bleak House* has to do with the delays of the law in chancery courts; *Little Dorrit* shows the injustice of debtors' prisons; *Old Curiosity Shop* leads us through prisons and pawnshops. Against these social wrongs Dickens is a pleader always on the side of the poor. Other novels have an ethical purpose: in *Dombey and Son* the sin of pride and its consequences are shown us; in *Martin Chuzzlewit* hypocrisy and selfishness are illustrated; and in the Christmas stories the text is, "Charity never faileth." Sentimentalist as he was, it cannot be doubted that Dickens rendered a very distinct service for social betterment.

POINTED OUT AS THE ORIGINAL OLD CURIOSITY SHOP

His Characteristics as a Novelist.—Dickens was, first of all, a close observer. He had an eye for dramatic incidents and situations. Most of his novels were written out of personal observation; he knew the life of the lower middle class better than any other novelist, and he is their champion. He had, furthermore, a lively imagination: sometimes it almost runs away with him, as he brings in character after character and scene after scene. He is a good story-teller, weaves an interesting plot out of unpromising material, and strikes off picturesque phrases and epithets. He is the most quotable of our great novelists. In the next place, Dickens had a keen eye for oddities of character, or "humors," as Ben Jonson called them. These eccentricities are enlarged until the characters become caricatures, such as we see in the pictures of our comic papers. They often appear like mere puppets worked by wires which the author is manipulating. But we may be sure that Dickens is thoroughly enjoying the show. These comic peculiarities—Uriah Heep's oily "humbleness," Barkis's "willingness," Micawber's big talk and his waiting for something "to turn up," Captain Cuttle's hook, Carker's teeth,—give many of his people an air of grotesque exaggeration; they may suggest real persons, though far from reality. Dickens's humor and pathos often run riot, the fun passing into broad farce and the sentiment lapsing into sentimentality. His pathos is at its best when he is dealing with children, even though they are sometimes too good, too pale and angelic. Little Nell is an immortal creation and the account of her death and burial an exquisite piece of prose. Dickens tenderly loved children, and in his portrayal of their joys and sorrows and in his pictures of Christmas he made a welcome contribution to our literature. He had a big heart.

Many regard *David Copperfield* as Dickens's masterpiece; it is partly an autobiography, and is, therefore, more personal than his other books. In the two historical novels, *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Barnaby Rudge*, we find greater dignity of style than in much of Dickens's other work. This is particularly true of *A Tale of Two Cities*, which is a story of the French Revolution, with London and Paris as the centers of interest. In this book Dickens,

true to his ethical instinct, "preaches a sermon on the sublime text, 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.'"[1] Dickens's style is essentially journalistic of the best type; it reflects his dramatic temperament, which shows itself at times as decidedly melodramatic. Every young student should early make the acquaintance of the people of Dickensland.

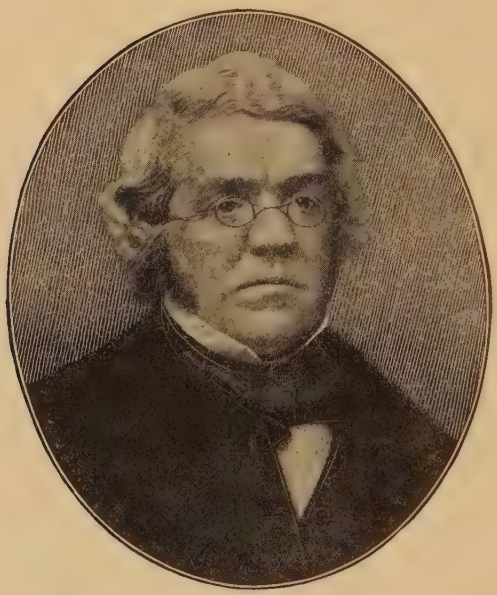
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY (1811-1863)

His Life.—Thackeray was born in 1811 in Calcutta, where his father was in the service of the East India Company. When he was five years old his father died; soon after this the boy was sent to England to live with an aunt. Meanwhile his mother married in India, and did not return to England until 1821. At eleven he entered the famous old Charterhouse School in London, where Addison and Steele received their early training. Here he remained six years. Many of Thackeray's experiences at the Charterhouse are reflected in *Pendennis*. Two years were passed at Trinity College, Cambridge, where enduring friendships were formed with Tennyson, Fitzgerald, Kinglake, and others. At the University the future novelist read widely in the eighteenth century writers, showing a special preference for Fielding, whom his own works sometimes suggest.

After leaving Cambridge Thackeray traveled on the continent, then studied law in London; as law was not to his taste, he turned to journalism. This change in profession was due in part, however, to necessity; for the small fortune left him by his father had been lost through bad investments and by gambling ventures at fashionable continental resorts. As a newspaper correspondent and illustrator of comic periodicals he was successful; this success led to the writing of various sketches of a semi-humorous character, many of which were contributed to the *London Punch*. In 1847 he began *Vanity Fair*, published the next year in monthly parts after being refused by a magazine. It is interesting to note that as a struggling young artist he had called on Dickens, even then well known, and had asked to be allowed to illustrate *Pickwick Papers*. Dickens received him cordially but declined to engage him. It was just as well, indeed, for Thackeray was original enough to rival, not to reflect, his popular contemporary.

With the publication of *Vanity Fair* Thackeray's reputation was established. Other novels followed; his fame steadily grew; he was invited to lecture in various parts of Great Britain. Drawing on his large fund of knowledge of eighteenth-century literature, he wrote with loving care a

[1] Cross: *Development of the English Novel*, p. 188.



WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY

series of lectures on *The English Humourists*, which he delivered before delighted audiences in his own country and in the United States. He first visited us in 1852; three years later he came again, giving this time his lectures on *The Four Georges*. During these visits he made many friends in America, to whom after his return to England he wrote some of his most charming letters. His greatest novels had now been written; *The Virginians*, which appeared in 1858, showed a distinct falling off in vigor and originality. From this time on Thackeray gave himself largely to writing sketches and editing the *Cornhill Magazine*. For several years he had been in declining health, so that when the end came in 1863 it was not unexpected. His grave is in Kensal Green Cemetery, London.

His Personality.—Thackeray was personally a lovable man. His kindliness of heart was dashed with the spice of playful humor. He knew much of the world of men—a clubman, a delightful guest, a charming host, and a genial companion, with a touch of the Bohemian in his temperament. Against his inherent laziness—his fondness for loafing—he struggled hard and succeeded

in doing an immense amount of work. His devotion to his wife, for years hopelessly deranged, is one of the most striking evidences of his brave and beautiful spirit. "He had many fine qualities," said Carlyle, "no guile or malice against any mortal, a big mass of a soul, but not strong in proportion; a beautiful vein of genius lay struggling about him." If Thackeray had a weakness, it was, as Leslie Stephen remarks, "the excess of sensibility of a strongly artistic temperament."

The Novels.—Thackeray's earlier work is a group of humorous sketches—*The Yellowplush Papers*, *Parish Sketchbook*, *Irish Sketchbook*, *Book of Snobs*,—and the picaresque novel, *Barry Lyndon*, modeled on Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*. Most of these writings were contributions to magazines. With the publication in 1848 of *Vanity Fair*, Thackeray's career as a novelist begins. He wrote in all five novels: *Vanity Fair* (1848), *Pendennis* (1849), *Henry Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1855), *The Virginians* (1858).

Vanity Fair is a satire on upper middle-class London society in the first two decades of the nineteenth century. Taking the title of his book from *Pilgrim's Progress*, Thackeray exposes the ambitions, the follies, the evil, the good, of dwellers in that region of lights and shadows. He pretends to be the master of a show and takes the liberty of stepping out before the curtain between the scenes to comment on the performance. It is an uncommonly interesting performance, too. Becky Sharp, clever, unprincipled, is the adventuress about whose fortunes the chief interest centers. Contrasted with her is the amiable, almost provokingly good, Amelia Sedley; attached to Amelia and faithful to the end is the honest, good-natured Dobbin. *Vanity Fair* is one of the most dramatic novels in English fiction: the incidents and situations are so carefully prepared for, that they have the cumulative effect of tragic crises. It would be hard to find a more striking catastrophe than Rawdon Crawley's attack on Lord Steyne in the fifty-third chapter of *Vanity Fair:* no wonder Thackeray exclaimed one day, with pardonable egotism, "What a genius I was when I wrote that chapter!"

Henry Esmond is one of the great historical novels in our literature; and yet so realistic is the setting and so human are the characters, that we almost forget that the author is dealing with scenes and people in a long vanished age. He had made himself wonderfully familiar with the social life of the Queen Anne period: Dick Steele and Joseph Addison are brought in naturally, and the *Spectator* is imitated to perfection. Thackeray loves Dick Steele, for in temperament he was partly akin to the genial essayist and clubman. In the character of *Henry Esmond*, however, he has reflected his own noblest traits. High-minded and true, this noble hero is worthy of the love of Lady Castlewood, the novelist's ideal of womanly grace and devotion. Over against the picture of her lofty womanhood is the brilliant sketch of her daughter Beatrix, selfish, ambitious, and withal perilously beautiful. All things considered, *Henry Esmond* is the greatest book Thackeray ever wrote. Aside from its purely literary value, it is a standing refutation of the glib remark, too often heard, that this great novelist is essentially cynical.

The two novels, *Pendennis* and *The Newcomes*, have something of the writer's own experience in them. *Pendennis*, a mixture of good and bad, reminds us of Fielding's Tom Jones, whom Thackeray had in mind, though Thackeray's portrayal is not as baldly realistic as the older novelist's. *The Newcomes* is a sequel to *Pendennis*, as *The Virginians* is to *Henry Esmond*. Colonel Newcome is a lovable character, with whom we are sorry to part, even as Thackeray was; for, after associating through many pages with this old-fashioned gentleman and tender-hearted soldier, we are ready to believe the report that Thackeray came from his workroom one day sobbing out, "I have killed Colonel Newcome!" *The Virginians* is more valuable as a picture of colonial life in Virginia than for the plot, which is comparatively weak.

The Essays (Lectures) of Thackeray.—The two series of character studies, *The English Humourists* and *The Four Georges*, are appreciative essays with a delightful personal flavor. In these essays, written with an audience in view, Thackeray takes the hearer or reader into his confidence and simply chats on about Steele

or Goldsmith or Swift, or about the tribe of the Georges. He tries to give you his own impression rather than to be judicially critical, and you accordingly carry away from the reading a clear notion of Thackeray the genial converser. Since Charles Lamb no English writer had talked more charmingly in essay form.

Characteristics as a Novelist.—Thackeray was an observer and depicter of life in the upper middle class of English society. He was not a social reformer in the sense that Dickens was, but rather a social satirist, setting forth in a sort of comedy of manners life as he saw it, which was neither heroic nor sordid. By instinct and by training Thackeray was a man of the world, gifted with keen sensibilities, and yet distrustful of sentimental display. He loved Dickens the man, but he quarreled with Dickens's art "a thousand and a thousand times," he said. Thackeray's art is essentially intellectual, Dickens's art more emotional; the one appeals in general more to the head, the other to the heart. Hence, more culture is required to understand Thackeray; and so he has never been as widely loved as his colleague. His first two novels, *Vanity Fair* and *Pendennis*, are more coldly realistic than the others; from *Vanity Fair*, in particular, has come the impression that Thackeray is cynical. In these two books he followed Fielding, giant humorist of the eighteenth century; in *Henry Esmond*, *The Newcomes*, and *The Virginians*, he deals more in sentiment. His later aim, says Professor Cross, was "to portray great and commanding goodness of heart in characters like Ethel, and Colonel Newcome, Colonel Esmond, and Harry Warrington; and by means of them to draw attention away from worldly meanness."[1] These novels, like the last plays of Shakespeare, make much of forgiveness, reconciliation, and the sacredness of friendship. The attitude of detachment, so often seen in Thackeray's half-ironical play with the characters in his earlier work, changes to one of sympathy in the later novels; and we rise from the reading of *The Newcomes* with the feeling that the man who wrote this book had a big heart. In the last analysis Thackeray, too, is a great moralist.

[1]Cross: *Development of the English Novel*, p. 206.

GEORGE ELIOT

GEORGE ELIOT (MARY ANN EVANS) (1819-1880)

Her Life.—Mary Ann (or Marian) Evans, generally known as George Eliot, was born in Warwickshire, Shakespeare's county, in 1819, daughter of a land steward. Her ancestry belonged to the farmer class, people of devout principles and solid common-sense. Miss Evans was sent to neighboring private schools, but at fifteen, because of the death of her mother, she had to leave school to become housekeeper for her father and the other children. She found time, however, to continue her studies, learning German, Italian, Latin, Greek, and later, Hebrew, besides reading widely in English literature and in science and philosophy. A friendship between herself and a cultured family near her home named Bray led Miss Evans to accept more liberal religious views than those held by her own family; but as long as her father lived she outwardly conformed, except for a brief interval, to his wishes in the matter of church attendance. After his death, in 1849, she went with the Brays to the continent, where she spent about a year in study and travel. Soon after her return she became a regular contributor to the *Westminster Review*, and in 1851 assistant editor.

This marks a turning point in George Eliot's life; for in London she met such intellectual men as Herbert Spencer and George Henry Lewes, and through them there opened for her a new field of endeavor.

Lewes, philosopher and brilliant critic, urged Miss Evans to write a novel; the result was *Amos Barton*, which was published in *Blackwood's Magazine* in 1856. The success of this and other stories was so great that George Eliot, as she now called herself, gave herself regularly to novel-writing; her first great book, *Adam Bede*, appeared in 1859. By this time her identity was generally well-known, though she retained her pen name upon the title-pages of the rest of her works. She and Lewes, with whom she had formed a union in 1854,[1] lived in and near London, and about them gathered a circle of distinguished writers. Frequent trips were made to the continent, particularly to Italy, where she prepared herself for writing other novels. Lewes died in 1878; two years later she married John W. Cross, a New York and London banker, a devoted friend of George Henry Lewes and herself, and later her biographer. In December of the same year, 1880, George Eliot died, and was buried in Highgate Cemetery, overlooking London. On the simple monument over her grave, which is next to that of Lewes, her inspirer and guide, are these words from her own great poem, "The Choir Invisible":

> Of those immortal dead, who live again
> In minds made better by their presence.

Her Personality.—Of George Eliot as she appeared in her London home a prominent friend and visitor said: "Although her features were heavy and not well proportioned, all was forgotten when that majestic head bent slowly down, and the eyes were lit up with a penetrating and lively gaze. She appeared much greater than her books. Her ability seemed to shrink beside her moral grandeur." With her somewhat masculine mind and features was combined a sensibility distinctly feminine. Perhaps the greatest craving of her nature was for sympathy and for some one to lean on. Early in her life she had given up the old religious faith, and there had in consequence come into her life a great sense of loneliness; her kin understood her not, and she found few congenial souls. The sympathy and helpfulness of George Henry Lewes drew her to him, and the union proved a happy one. George

[1] A legal technicality stood in the way of a divorce between Lewes and his wife, from whom he had separated for sufficient reason. The relationship between Lewes and George Eliot was virtually, though not formally, a marriage.

Eliot's nature was profoundly serious, and her spirit, as revealed in her books, deeply religious. There is at times a suggestion of the Puritan in the sternness of the moral law set forth in her novels. There is humor in the homely scenes of her less philosophic novels drawn from her girlhood recollections, but her usual mood is one of great moral earnestness.

The Novels.—The novels of George Eliot fall into two groups, and her literary career covers about twenty years, from 1857 to 1876. The novels of the first group are *Scenes from Clerical Life* (1857–1858), including *Amos Barton*, *Mr. Gilfil's Love-story*, and *Janet's Repentance*; *Adam Bede* (1859), *The Mill on the Floss*, *Silas Marner* (1861). Those of the second group are: *Romola* (1863), *Felix Holt* (1866), *Middlemarch* (1871–1872), and *Daniel Deronda* (1876). In the first group of novels George Eliot wrote out of her own experiences and observations in Warwickshire and adjoining counties, and these works accordingly have a good deal of family history in them and some autobiography. The character of Adam Bede, for instance, in the novel of that name is partly drawn from George Eliot's own father, while Dinah Morris was modeled after an aunt who was a Methodist exhorter. In *The Mill on the Floss* Maggie Tulliver is a portrait of Mary Ann Evans herself as a girl, and Tom Tulliver is her brother, Isaac Evans. Indeed, so thinly veiled are certain characters in *Scenes from Clerical Life* and several minor ones in *Adam Bede*, that they were easily identified by those acquainted with the families of the novelist's old neighborhood. The portrayal in these earlier novels of provincial life, with its humorous and tragic incidents and situations, shows what great dramatic power George Eliot had.

The novels of the first group were written more rapidly than those of the second and with less effort and studied preparation. George Eliot had long been ambitious to write a story on the Italian Renaissance; and so she went to Florence, read an immense number of books, familiarized herself with historic spots in the old city of Savonarola, and laboriously produced *Romola*. It is a monument to her learning and industry, but it lacks the human

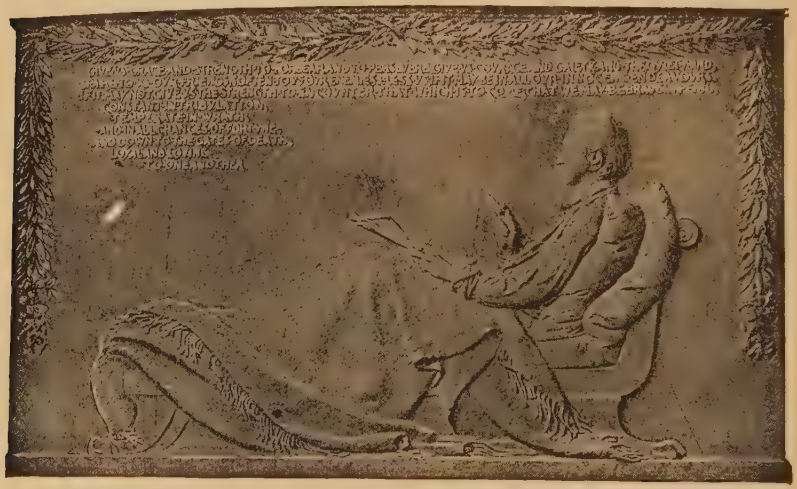
interest of its predecessors. Even when she turned again to English scenes in *Middlemarch* and partly in *Daniel Deronda*, she could not quite bring into them the freshness of her earlier work. She was older, she had thought and struggled greatly, and she somewhat overburdened the later books with psychology.

The Psychological Novel.—George Eliot was the first to make prominent in our prose fiction what has been called the "psychological novel,"—that is, the novel in which the motives of the characters—their inner lives—are carefully analyzed by the novelist. The results of certain actions are shown in the light of cause and effect; the tragic consequences of self-indulgence; the need of self-sacrifice on the part of the individual for the larger good of the community or the race. She likes to impress some great moral law: Silas Marner was saved from selfishness and despair by the love of a little child; Lydgate, in *Middlemarch*, lost his ideals and wrecked his life through fatal weakness of the will; Tito Melema, in *Romola*, by self-indulgence gradually grew indifferent to the call of duty until loss of life followed loss of character. The tragedy of failure—in which not physical death, but the loss of an ideal or the frustration of a great hope constitutes the catastrophe—is a favorite theme with George Eliot. She teaches that the spiritual progress of the world depends upon sacrifice. No other novelist has made so much of character growth and character decay, and no one has surpassed her in revealing the moral grandeur of obscure lives in which fidelity to duty is a daily religion.

George Eliot's Style.—While George Eliot is a great moral teacher and delineator of character, it must not be forgotten that she is at the same time a great artist. *Silas Marner* is one of the most perfectly constructed stories in English fiction. *Adam Bede*—generally regarded as her most original and interesting work—is almost Shakespearean in its dramatic power. In all her novels there are passages of cadenced prose of rare poetic beauty, touched with sadness sometimes, and again splendid with the gloom of Greek tragedy. Her poetry is somber and heavy with fate, but *The Spanish Gypsy*, her most ambitious

work in verse, contains passages of exquisite harmony, while "The Choir Invisible" is a solemn hymn on the immortality of influence. The concluding chapter of *The Mill on the Floss* is one of the finest specimens of impassioned, and yet delicately modulated prose, in the literature of prose fiction.

George Eliot had the heart of a poet and the head of a philosopher. The heaviest passages are shot through with gleams of emotion; and sympathy, the greatest need of her woman's heart, lights up the somber atmosphere of her novels. She believed that the future of each man and woman is in a sense a reflection of his or her past life, and that "our finest hope is finest memory."



STEVENSON MEMORIAL IN ST. GILES'S CHURCH, EDINBURGH

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON (1850-1894)

His Life.—Robert Louis Stevenson, romancer, essayist, and letter-writer, was born in Edinburgh in 1850, son of an eminent lighthouse engineer. His maternal grandfather was professor of philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. Hence the remark from a friend of Stevenson that he inherited both *Lux et Veritas* (Light and Truth). Stevenson was educated at the University of Edinburgh, where he was noted as an omnivorous reader and as a writer for the college magazine. In accordance with his father's wishes

he studied civil engineering,—actually following this vocation for a time—then studied law; but in his case the trial of the law ended in the Scotch verdict of "not proven." He therefore went back to his first love, literature. His health was poor, and travel in France and Spain was recommended. Here he led an outdoor life, and here he found abundant material for sketches and stories. This half-Bohemian life appealed to Stevenson, and henceforth he became in spirit and movement a citizen of the world.

In 1879 Stevenson came to America, crossed the continent in an immigrant train to San Francisco, and in and near that city spent almost a year. He had undertaken this journey partly for the love of adventure, partly to gain new literary material, and partly for his health. In San Francisco he married Mrs. Osbourne, whom he had met four years before in France. Soon after this the Stevensons returned to Europe, spending the next few years in Switzerland, France, and the south of England. Meanwhile he had written *Treasure Island* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, the latter adding greatly to his fame. In 1887 he left England forever for America; and after spending a winter in the Adirondacks, he set sail for the South Sea Islands with his wife, two step-children, and his mother. For two years they cruised about in the South Seas, and in 1890 settled in Samoa near Apia, where he had bought an estate. Here as a sort of island chieftain, on friendly terms with the natives and visited by friends from home-lands beyond the seas, Stevenson lived happily until his death in 1894. He is buried on the top of Vaca Mountain just back of his home; on the big stone that covers his grave are carved these now familiar lines written by himself:

Under the wide and starry sky
Dig the grave and let me lie.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will.

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here he lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from the sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

His Personality.—Stevenson's personality is as interesting as anything he ever wrote. Man of the world, Bohemian, poet, Cavalier, Puritan, he was "brother to a prince and fellow to a beggar," all in one. The four characteristics of the man Stevenson which shine through his works and which endeared him to his friends are: (1) His boyishness. He never lost his zest for adventure and his enthusiasm. He wrote *Treasure Island* for his twelve-year-old stepson with the energy and fresh joy of a youth

whose highest ambition is to chase pirates. (2) His friendliness. "He always liked the people he was with," and they loved him in return. The natives of Samoa named him "Tusitala" ("teller of tales"), and built a road to his house which they called "the road of loving hearts." (3) His industry. In spite of his almost constant physical suffering Stevenson wrote a small library of books during the twenty years of his literary life. He was remarkably painstaking with his work, copying and recopying his manuscripts; he was his own severest critic. He said that "it is better to lose health like a spendthrift than to waste it like a miser." (4) His courage. There was often a dashing recklessness in the way Stevenson tempted fate to do its worst. Both in his fight against disease and death, carried on with steady cheerfulness, and in the part he played in Samoan politics, he showed rare courage. His philosophy is summed up in a letter he wrote to an English friend, in which he declares that every man "was born for struggle, and only tastes his life in effort and on the condition that he is opposed."

His Works —Stevenson wrote—besides a number of sketches, plays, and poems,—half a dozen long romances, some short stories, and two or three volumes of personal and critical essays. Of the longer works the best known are *Treasure Island* (1883), *Kidnapped* (1886), *The Master of Ballantrae* (1889), *David Balfour* (1893), *The Wrecker* (in collaboration with his stepson, Lloyd Osbourne, 1892). These are tales of adventure, modern sea-stories. These narratives represent the rise of a new romantic movement in English literature, a reaction from excessive realism. They are nothing more than a form of the historical novel, which had died out since the days of Scott and his imitators. Now another great Scotchman made pure romance popular. The book that brought Stevenson world-wide fame was *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a study in dual personality, the same theme which is treated more briefly in *Markheim*, a powerful piece of psychology. *Weir of Hermiston*, left unfinished at his death, gave promise of being his masterpiece.

Stevenson was a successful writer of short stories; these have

been published in the two volumes entitled *The Merry Men* and *The New Arabian Nights.* The stories are generally romantic in spirit with a touch of whimsical humor, and many of them have a moral element. They are always artistically constructed, for Stevenson had a delicate sense of form which he perfected by unremitting labor. But he is more than a writer of fiction; he is one of the most delightful essayists and letter-writers in any literature. Besides an interesting personality, Stevenson had a mind steeped in great literature, and along with all that he had a lively fancy. His personal essays are charming confidential talks out of a full mind. A few of the best are "An Apology for Idlers," "Talks and Talkers," "A Gossip of Romance," "The Character of Dogs," "Aes Triplex," "Pulvis et Umbra." The essays, personal and literary, are contained in the volumes *Virginibus Puerisque, Familiar Studies of Men and Books,* and *Memories and Portraits.* Every young person should at least read "Books Which Have Influenced Me" and the inspiring "Aes Triplex" ("Triple Brass,"—that is, indomitable courage); this last is full of Stevenson's own buoyant optimism. Here, for instance, is a typical sentence from it: "Every heart that has beat strong and cheerfully has left a hopeful impulse behind it in the world, and bettered the tradition of mankind." Stevenson's letters, written to his friends from Vailima, his home in Samoa, are as interesting as his stories.

Stevenson's Style.—Stevenson worked to perfect his style, with the result that he finally wrought out a clear, well-modulated form of expression, which is the admiration of critics and the joy of cultivated readers. He "played the sedulous ape," as he expresses it, to many masters of style, finally coming to the conclusion that the only test of writing is this: "If there is anywhere a thing said in two sentences that could have been as clearly and as engagingly and as forcibly said in one, then it's amateur work." Artist that he was, Stevenson was also much of a preacher; but his moralizing is seasoned with a large tolerance and genial humor. The spirit of Stevenson the man and the writer may be summed up in these words from one of his letters: "So long as we love we serve. So long as we are loved by others, I would almost say we

are indispensable; and no man is useless while he has a friend." These qualities in Robert Louis Stevenson have made him one of the most companionable souls in our literature.

MINOR NOVELISTS

Bulwer-Lytton (1803–1873).—Edward Bulwer, Lord Lytton, was one of the most popular novelists of his day, brilliant, versatile, industrious. He turned out in rapid succession a number of novels on a variety of subjects, reflecting with uncommon cleverness the literary tastes of the mid-nineteenth century. He was, at the same time, an active politician, member of Parliament, and a conspicuous figure in fashionable society.

Bulwer wrote sentimental and philanthropic novels—somewhat like those of Dickens a little later—such as, *Paul Clifford* (1830), and *Eugene Aram* (1832); historical romances—*The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834), *Rienzi* (1835), *The Last of the Barons* (1843), and *Harold* (1843); "Gothic" tales of mystery and horror—*Zanoni* (1842), and *A Strange Story* (1862); realistic society novels—*Ernest Maltravers* (1837), *The Caxtons* (1849), and *My Novel* (1853)—suggestive of Thackeray. Besides novels, he wrote two plays—*The Lady of Lyons* and *Richelieu*—which, in spite of their artificial, melodramatic nature, have retained a certain degree of popularity. *The Last Days of Pompeii* has proved to be Bulwer's most enduring work. Indeed, as a writer of historical romances Bulwer is at his best. While confessedly an imitator of Scott, he was a more faithful student of history, and his avowed purpose was to make fiction truer to fact. In order to enhance the dramatic element, he was fond of choosing for treatment in his novels critical turning-points in history. His romances are more sensational than Sir Walter's, and his characters far less human. Still, Bulwer's historical and social novels are interesting reading to-day, and their author holds a secure place among the minor novelists. The popularity of *The Last Days of Pompeii*, in particular, shows no signs of abating.

Charlotte Brontë (1816–1855).—Next to George Eliot and Jane Austen, the most important woman novelist of the Victorian

Era is Charlotte Brontë, daughter of a Yorkshire clergyman. Miss Brontë spent her life of thirty-nine years at the little village of Haworth amid the dreary northern moors. Like Jane Austen, she limited her settings and characters to her own region, except in *Villette* (1853), which reflects her experiences as a teacher and pupil in Brussels. Her other novels, *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Shirley* (1849), belong to Yorkshire. Into these books she put her own mental and spiritual struggles, which were many. Her aim in her greatest novel, *Jane Eyre*, was to depict with genuine feeling homely scenes and unconventional people. One day she said to her sisters, Anne and Emily, themselves writers of novels: "I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours." She more than kept her word: Jane Eyre, the heroine of the book by that name, was a new kind of heroine, and Rochester, whom she ultimately marries, a new kind of hero. Charlotte Brontë looked into her own heart and wrote; the result is a novel of impassioned realism. Into the commonplace she put imagination and emotion and made startling things happen. Several incidents and situations are as thrilling as one finds in melodramas and the old "dime novels," but the art of *Jane Eyre* saves it. The story and characters have the stamp of sincerity. By her realism Charlotte Brontë suggests Jane Austen, and by her intensity and her interest in moods and motives she is related to George Eliot.

Anthony Trollope (1815–1882) —Friend, literary associate, and in spirit a kinsman of Thackeray, Anthony Trollope was an uncompromising realist. There is nothing romantic about his thirty-odd novels. Trollope held a position in the London post-office, but all his spare time he devoted to writing stories. Every day, rain or shine, he wrote so many pages, wherever he might be. If, for instance, he was waiting at a railway station for a train, out came his tablet and pencil, and in a moment he was lost to the noise and the crowd, deep into his plot, working away. In this methodical manner, he turned out an immense number of books, many of them of surprisingly good quality under the circumstances. He wrote mainly of the country clergy and gentry

in and about cathedral towns. He does not probe into character or concern himself with the deeper feelings of his men and women; he puzzles over no problems. The tone in his novels is one of high-bred irony bordering on banter. Trollope was a master of social satire, smooth and polished in his style, reminding one, both in matter and manner, of Thackeray, but without the latter's geniality.

The novels of Trollope best worth reading are *Barchester Towers* (1857), *Framley Parsonage* (1861), and *The Last Chronicle of Barset* (1867). *Barchester Towers*, portraying life among the clergy at the imaginary cathedral town of Barchester, is as realistic as a Jane Austen novel and as amusingly clever as a chapter from *Vanity Fair*.

Charles Reade (1814–1884).—Another realist, but sentimental enough and reformative enough to be a kinsman of Dickens, was Charles Reade, author of *Peg Woffington* (1852), *It is Never too Late to Mend* (1856), *The Cloister and the Hearth* (1860), *Hard Cash* (1863), *Put Yourself in his Place* (1870), and other novels. Reade began his career by writing plays, and his first novels have a distinctly dramatic quality; *Peg Woffington*, one of his best stories, deals with stage life. Other stories have to do with social reforms: *Put Yourself in his Place*, for instance, is a plea for the rights of the individual workingman as against the tyranny of trades unions. Reade made a thorough study of the social conditions treated in his books; they have, therefore, in addition to the interest of the stories proper, a value as social documents. Both in purposefulness and dramatic movement his novels suggest those of Dickens. His one historical romance, *The Cloister and the Hearth*, a story of the fifteenth century, the time of the Renaissance and of Erasmus, is his masterpiece, and one of the few great novels of its class since Scott. To prepare himself for writing this novel, Reade is said to have gone through a vast number of books.

Charles Kingsley (1819–1875).—Charles Kingsley was a clergyman, and for a time Professor of Modern History at Cambridge. He was both a religious and social reformer, attempting to democ-

ratize the Church and to bring it and the laboring man closer together. In two impassioned novels, *Yeast* (1848) and *Alton Locke* (1850), Kingsley points out the grievances of the poor working-classes and the obligation of the Church to help them. He believed that between labor and capital the Church was the proper mediator. Kingsley was a friend and disciple of Carlyle. In these first novels he preaches what may be called Christian socialism.

Kingsley wrote two historical novels, *Hypatia* (1853), an account of the conflict between Greek philosophy and Christianity in the old city of Alexandria in the fifth century; and *Westward Ho!* a breezy story of voyage and adventure in the days of Elizabeth, when England was sending expeditions to the New World. *Westward Ho!* is the most spirited of Kingsley's novels and, all things considered, his best work. It bears the same relation to the Elizabethan Age that Thackeray's *Henry Esmond* does to the Queen Anne Period. Kingsley also wrote poetry of considerable merit.

Other Minor Novelists.—By virtue of one or two social novels, MRS. ELIZABETH GASKELL (1810–1865), holds an honorable place among the lesser writers. She, too, had an instinct for reform, and after visiting factories and the homes of laborers, wrote a book or two depicting conditions as she saw them in certain manufacturing towns of northern England. The novel by which she is still remembered, however, is *Cranford* (1853), which has long been a classic picture of old-fashioned village life. As a novelist Mrs. Gaskell is not unlike Maria Edgeworth and Jane Austen in her clear and forceful delineation of rural society.

WILKIE COLLINS (1824–1889) thrilled a large class of readers for twenty or thirty years with his novels of mystery. He knows how to keep the reader in suspense to the last, when the puzzle is solved to everybody's satisfaction. It is hardly necessary to say that books so luridly exciting do not belong to great literature, and yet *The Woman in White* (1860) and *The Moonstone* (1868), Collins's most successful novels, are not without merit

as examples of plot structure; for however unreal the characters are, the story at least grips the attention. The works of Collins are in reality detective stories, forerunners of the "Sherlock Holmes" species so common to-day.

RICHARD D. BLACKMORE (1825–1900) has written one book, *Lorna Doone* (1869), which has attained a deserved popularity, not only for the interesting and wholesome love-story, but also for the sympathy with nature revealed in it and the poetic prose of many of the descriptions. As Scott interpreted the Highlands, so has Blackmore given us an unforgettable picture of the altogether charming landscapes of Devonshire.

LATER NOVELISTS

George Meredith (1828–1909).—The first regular novel of George Meredith, *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (1859), appeared the same year in which George Eliot's *Adam Bede* was published, and during the half-century following, he came to be regarded by discriminating critics as one of the greater English novelists. He did not in his lifetime attain wide popularity, nor is he likely ever to be a general favorite. The reasons are not far to seek: in the first place, Meredith, like Carlyle and Browning, twists and condenses the English language, so that only the patient and thoughtful reader can follow him in his whimsical moods; in the next place, he is often extremely subtle in his allusions and fantastic in his figures of speech, so that a mind less nimble than his own fails to keep up with him. He is a psychological novelist, like George Eliot in his fondness for analysis of motive, but unlike her in his preference for comedy over tragedy. In a delightful essay on *The Idea of Comedy* (1877) Meredith defines the essence of comedy as "thoughtful laughter," the "humor of the mind": that is the kind of comedy one finds in Meredith's novels—the laughter of the mind, not of the diaphragm. This is very different from Fielding, or Dickens, or Thackeray, or even from George Eliot in her homely scenes in which Mrs. Poyser is the talker. Meredith's novels are essentially intellectual; there is a clash of ideas, a

good deal of mental play, much clever fencing. He likes to take some character with a hobby,—as, for instance, the elder Feverel's theory about a boy's education, or Willoughby's refined selfishness (in *The Egoist*)—and make him suffer for it, by putting him through a sort of purgatory. Men and women must, he thinks, atone for social wrongs. Meredith's comedy often has the bitter sting of tragedy.

Of Meredith's twelve or thirteen novels, those most representative are *The Ordeal of Richard Feverel* (in many respects the most poetic and interesting), *Harry Richmond*, *Beauchamp's Career*, *The Egoist*, *Diana of the Crossways*. All things considered, *The Egoist* will probably give one the best general idea of Meredith's characteristics.

Thomas Hardy (1840——).—Thomas Hardy has spent his life in his native Dorsetshire, studying the scenes and the rural folk he knows so well. He studied architecture and practiced it for a time in London; but he grew weary of the artificial life of the great city and went back to Dorset to study, to think, and to write of nature and the peasants. Hardy is a realist and at the same time a poet; to him the hill, the heath, the woodland, the storm, the sunset, are alive with personality, in comparison with which the creature called man is a mere shadow. Men come and go, but nature is abiding, an eternal background for the little drama of individual life. No other novelist has succeeded so well in humanizing nature and in making the setting of his novels a motive for action on the part of his characters, with the determining power of destiny. Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native*, for example, is as much a person as any man or woman in the book, so wonderfully has the author invested the old barren moor with warmth and color. The atmosphere of that old Wessex region, famous in early Saxon times, hangs about the novels of Hardy like a purple haze. Fate looms large in these stories, as it does in some old Greek drama; for Hardy is something of a pagan, and half-ironically regards man as a plaything of the gods. And so, while his novels are intensely interesting, they are upon the whole depressing.

RUDYARD KIPLING

Hardy's earlier novels,—*Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *A Pair of Blue Eyes* (1873), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874)—are pleasant reading, because of their fresh idyllic quality and comparatively cheerful tone; the atmosphere grows more somber in *The Return of the Native* (1878) and *The Woodlanders* (1887), two powerful works; and finally, the gloom deepens into pessimism in *Tess of the D' Urbervilles* (1891) and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). The two novels which reveal his art and philosophy most fully are *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the D' Urbervilles*, in which the sinister forces of nature seem to conspire to show how helpless is man in the hands of fate.

Rudyard Kipling (1865——).—The best known of the later writers of prose fiction is Rudyard Kipling, whose short stories and poems gave him immediate and widespread popularity. Endowed with great mental curiosity, he has shown interest in all that is modern; he reflects the spirit of a machine age both in the

technique and content of much of his writing. He knows, moreover, the British soldier and speaks with admiration and authority of "Tommy Atkins" and military doings in India. Indeed, he has revealed modern India to us, as long ago Scott showed us Scotland, and Maria Edgeworth, Ireland; of the mystic Orient he is master, that dreamy, irresponsible India which is felt as an atmosphere in the pages of *Kim*. At home in India, in England, and in Vermont, Kipling is in spirit a citizen of the world, and his appeal is universal.

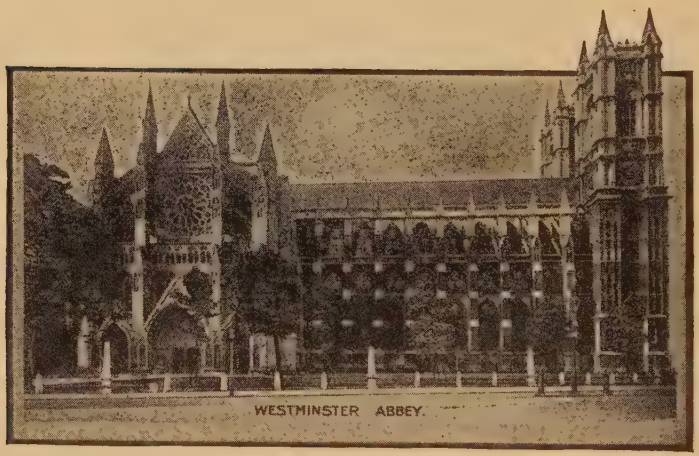
While he has written several successful novels, it is in the short story that Kipling is at his best. More than any other British author he has helped to make this form of literature classic by investing with permanent and general interest scenes and persons in which the East and West meet. Such stories as *The Man who Would be King*, *The Brushwood Boy*, and *Without Benefit of Clergy*, are delicate little romances, prose-poems, steadied and given substance by the realistic touch of a master who is at heart a man of action. His short stories have appealed to all sorts and conditions of men and made them his friends. When Kipling was dangerously ill in New York in 1899, newsboys and cabdrivers eagerly inquired every morning about his condition, a tribute paid to few men of letters, however democratic they may profess to be.

Of his poetry the "Recessional" has long been sung and quoted over the English-speaking world, and would of itself assure him permanent fame. The collected volumes of his verse, *Barrack-Room Ballads* and *The Seven Seas*, strongly appeal to many persons who ordinarily do not read poetry. The reason for this may doubtless be found in the unconventional nature of these poems, their vigorous rhythm, and the buoyant courage which is written large between the lines; these qualities make them vital to those who look for energy and action in literature.

True Anglo-Saxon that he is, Kipling is both moralist and imperialist, with an abounding faith in the future of the British people. That faith is shared by all who, as English-speaking men and women, are heirs of such a splendid heritage as this brief

history attempts to record. The long story of English literature, which we have imperfectly traced through fourteen centuries, may well conclude on a note so clearly prophetic. To the inheritors of her vast renown Mother England speaks bravely and hopefully in these words of Kipling:

> Go to your work and be strong, halting not in your ways,
> Baulking the end half-won for an instant dole of praise.
> Stand to your work and be wise—certain of sword and pen,
> Who are neither children nor Gods, but men in a world of men.



WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THE PERIOD IN OUTLINE (1837-1910)

LITERATURE	HISTORY
I. The Essayists	
Thomas B. Macaulay (1800-1859) Essay on Milton, published, 1825	Reign of Victoria, 1837-1901
Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881): Hero-Worshiper, Prophet	Reign of Edward VII, 1901-1910
John Ruskin (1819-1900): Art-Critic and Social Reformer	Morse's Telegraph, 1844
Matthew Arnold: Apostle of Culture	Repeal of Corn Laws, 1846
Newman, Pater, Froude, Huxley	Crimean War, 1854
II. The Poets	
Alfred Tennyson (1809-1892): Idylls of the King, In Memoriam, etc.	Publication of Darwin's Origin of Species, 1859
Robert Browning (1812-1889): Monologues, Dramatic Lyrics, Dramas	Atlantic Cable laid, 1866
Matthew Arnold (1822-1888): Poetry of Doubt	Gladstone's Home Rule Bill, 1886
Elizabeth Barrett Browning (1806-1861): Sonnets from the Portuguese, Casa Guidi Windows, etc.	First Hague Peace Conference, 1898
The Pre-Raphaelites: Rossetti, Morris, Charles Algernon Swinburne (1837-1900)	Boer War, 1899-1902
III. The Novelists	
Charles Dickens (1812-1870): The Humanitarian Novel	First Wireless Telegraph between England and America, 1907
William M. Thackeray (1811-1863): Social Satire, Realism	Accession of George V, 1910
George Eliot (Mary Ann Evans) (1819-1880): The Psychological Novel	House of Lords loses veto power, 1911
Robert Louis Stevenson (1850-1894): The Romance of Adventure	George V crowned in India as Emperor, 1911
Minor Novelists: Bulwer-Lytton, C. Brontë, Trollope, Reade, Kingsley	
Later Novelists: George Meredith, Thomas Hardy, Rudyard Kipling	

Age of Democracy and Science; Reign of the Novel and the Short Story; Practical Philanthropy; Wide Range of Literature.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Historical.—Lee's Life of Queen Victoria, McCarthy's History of Our Own Times.

Literary.—Saintsbury's History of Nineteenth Century Literature, Walker's The Age of Tennyson (Macmillan), Stedman's Victorian Poets (Houghton), Brownell's Victorian Prose Masters, Dawson's Makers of Modern English (Revell), Dowden's Transcripts and Studies ("Victorian Literature"), Lives of authors in English Men of Letters and Great Writers Series.

The following works will be found helpful:

(1) The Essayists.—Birrell's Obiter Dicta, Bagehot's Literary Studies, Bayne's My Masters, Hutton's Literary Essays, Gates's Three Studies in Literature, Stephen's Hours in a Library, Trevelyan's Life and Letters of Macaulay, Mrs. Meynell's John Ruskin, Hobson's John Ruskin, Guernsey's Thomas Carlyle (Appleton), Woodberry's Makers of Literature, Introductions to Holt's "English Readings."

(2) The Poets.—Hallam Tennyson's Memoir of Tennyson, Van Dyke's The Poetry of Tennyson (Scribners), Luce's Handbook to Tennyson, Luce's Tennyson Primer (Macmillan), Ritchie's Tennyson and his Friends, Genung's In Memoriam, Sneath's The Mind of Tennyson, Globe Edition of Tennyson (Macmillan). * * * Mrs. Orr's Handbook to Browning, Corson's Introduction to Browning (Heath), Brooke's The Poetry of Browning, Alexander's Introduction to Browning (Ginn), Symons' Introduction to Browning (Cassell), Berdoe's Browning Cyclopaedia, Riverside (Houghton) or Camberwell (Crowell) or Globe (Macmillan) edition of Browning.

(3) The Novelists.—Cross's Development of the English Novel (Macmillan), Stoddard's Evolution of the Novel, Perry's A Study of Prose Fiction (Houghton), Dawson's Makers of Prose Fiction (Revell), Hamilton's Methods and Materials of Fiction, Phelps's Essays on Modern Novelists (Macmillan).

Page's British Poets of the Nineteenth Century (Sanborn) is an excellent volume of representative poems.

CHAPTER TWELVE

TWENTIETH CENTURY WRITERS

(Supplementary Chapter)

Social Democracy.—The widespread interest in social welfare, already noted in the works of the later Victorian writers, forms a still more marked characteristic of the twentieth century. Reforms which were vaguely foreshadowed in the last decades of the nineteenth century have been realized by legislative enactment. The public mind and the public eye have been centered upon the inequalities in social condition, and practical, organized effort has been exerted to remedy the evils of poverty. Preventive measures have received more attention than merely curative; improved sanitation has lowered the death rate, cleanliness has led to health, happiness, and thriftiness. Politically, the trend of thought and action has been strongly democratic; socialistic theories have been boldly proclaimed on street corners and in legislative halls, while newspapers and magazines have freely opened their columns to frank discussions of proposed reforms. Such agitation naturally resulted in much unrest, particularly in the old conservative countries of Europe, where the democratic leaven was beginning to work on the ancient lump of tradition. The clash between the forces of reaction and those of progress, between the ideal of autocratic power and that of beneficent democracy, finally resulted in the most tragic conflict in the history of nations, the World War, which began in 1914. The effect on international life as well as on literature has been deeply significant.

The New Realism.—The literature of the twentieth century has in the main reflected a growing interest in common, everyday life. It is realistic still, but with a difference; the emphasis has

been shifted in the writings of many novelists, dramatists, and poets, from the thoughts and doings of "the average man" to the struggles, failures, and aspirations of the man socially and economically below the average. The later books have much to say about the "common lot" and just as much, perhaps, about the sub-common lot. The result has been the adoption into the republic of letters of a variegated and, according to old standards, a somewhat degenerate citizenship. The proletariat has found a voice in literature. Of course humble folk had their recognition in Wordsworth and Dickens and Hardy long before, but not in the free, inward, and untrammeled way in which they reveal themselves in Bennett, Masefield, and Gibson. This later realism is downright and thorough-going, sometimes sordid and brutal.

The Celtic Revival.—Parallel with this interest in the realism of lower life we find an enthusiasm for pure romance. Indeed, in the history of literature the two have never been long separated. Romantic revivals have served to counteract the paralysis of provincialism in art. The latest rebirth of romance has come in connection with the study and interpretation of old Irish folklore. This "Celtic Renaissance," as it is usually called, had its beginnings with the publication in 1888 of a little volume entitled *Poems and Ballads of Young Ireland*, in which there is seen "the coöperative, concerted nature of the effort of the younger generation to give a new impulse to Irish poetry."[1] One of the contributors to this volume was William Butler Yeats. Since then a number of poets and dramatists have interpreted in exquisite verse and prose the romantic legends of old Ireland, cetering about such primitive Celtic heroes as Cuchulain, fighter of the sea, Oisin, immortal wanderer, Caolte, stormer of castles, and Deirdre, the ill-fated lady of sorrows. This shadowy dream-world of Celtic myth has furnished inspiration to a group of Irish poets for an enchanting cycle of song in lyric and dramatic form.

From the long list of recent writers a few of the most prominent

[1]Ernest A. Boyd: *Ireland's Literary Renaissance*, pp. 94-95.

may be chosen as representatives of twentieth-century English literature. Most of these, it is safe to say, have already become standard and their permanent fame is assured. Opinions may differ as to their relative importance and as to the ultimate standing of certain individual works, but there is likely to be general agreement that these writers deserve a place in a chapter on contemporary literature. The authors selected naturally fall into three general classes: Novelists and Essayists, Dramatists, Poets.

NOVELISTS AND ESSAYISTS

William Frend De Morgan (1839-1917).—Until he was sixty-five, De Morgan devoted himself to painting, to making designs for stained glass, and to the manufacture of pottery. At this advanced age he became a novelist and published in 1906 his first and greatest book, *Joseph Vance.* It is the history of a boy of low origin who was rescued from poverty and neglect and educated by a kind-hearted gentleman of wealth and culture, Dr. Thorpe of London. The story is one of the longest and certainly the most leisurely in movement among twentieth-century novels. The plot is loosely strung together, but the characters grow into the reader's regard as the story advances until they seem to be real persons worthy of lasting remembrance. The method of De Morgan is essentially that of Thackeray and Dickens and Trollope; in him we find a return to the manner of the early Victorian novelists, but with no loss of popularity on that account in an age which demands greater swiftness of development and more definiteness of technique than the older generation. Other novels of De Morgan are *Alice-for-Short, Somehow Good,* and *It Never Can Happen Again.* Of these, the last two are more modern in theme and construction, but De Morgan's fame as a novelist is likely to rest with *Joseph Vance,* which is a great life-book that wears well.

Joseph Conrad (1857-——).—Joseph Conrad Korzeniowski (his original name) is a native of southwestern Russia, but has

spent most of his life on English ships and in England. He is descended from a prominent family of military and artistic tastes. He left home early in life, bent upon knowing the sea and its mysteries; for nearly twenty years he belonged to the English merchant marine and sailed many seas and visited strange lands. Thus he came to have a familiar knowledge of all kinds and conditions of men and of nature in every mood, but the tropics made the strongest appeal to him. During almost endless wanderings, he acquired a vast fund of information and heard a variety of tongues, a number of which he learned to speak; at last, when nearly forty, he settled in England. Since then Conrad has written many short stories and several novels; his works number about twenty volumes, one of which is an autobiography, *A Personal Record* (1912). His first novel, *Almayer's Folly*, was published in 1895. Several of his best known and more popular volumes are *Tales of Unrest* (1898), *Lord Jim* (1900), *Typhoon* (1902), *Youth* (1903), *The Mirror of the Sea* (1906), and *Chance* (1914). A favorite theme with Conrad is the struggle of man against nature or with certain larger forces of life, which he cannot understand and which usually defeat him or sadly weaken him in the end. His books are full of the atmosphere of the sea; the language is often poetic, and the refined subtlety of the style reminds one of Henry James and of the French short-story writers. Among the novels, *Lord Jim*, and among the shorter stories, the volumes entitled *Youth* and *Typhoon*, will perhaps give one the best idea of Conrad's powers. He has a passion for ships and the sea.

John Galsworthy (1867——).—John Galsworthy is a native of Surrey, an Oxford man, a lawyer by profession, a novelist and dramatist by practice. Before he was thirty he began to write, and his four most important novels are *The Man of Property* (1906), *The Country House* (1907), *Fraternity* (1909), and *The Patrician* (1911). Two later novels are *The Dark Flower* (1914) and *Beyond* (1917). Galsworthy is a social satirist, a mordant analyst of the complacency, narrowness, and traditional limitations of upper middle-class English society. His books depict the

ultra-conservatism of various classes—the wealthy, the country nobility, the intellectuals, the aristocracy—each self-satisfied and self-centered. He has a fine sense of structure and proportion, a delicate feeling for the right word and the exact phrase, and a keen eye for weaknesses in character. His novels are cold but exceedingly clever; his persons are sometimes types rather than real individuals; and his characterization occasionally borders on caricature. His style is noteworthy for its clearness and distinction.

Arnold Bennett (1867——).—Arnold Bennett, a native of North Staffordshire, did his first literary work as editor of a London periodical called *Woman*, after having grown weary of the law. The stories of the Five Towns, which grew out of the gray and sordid life in the pottery district of Staffordshire, display fine craftmanship and convincing characterization. It is in *The Old Wives' Tale* (1908), however, that Bennett's art is seen at its best. This is the story of the lives of two women, the daughters of an old draper, who labor and struggle and dream through fifty years of hope and disillusionment. The plot is intricate, but realistic; and the experiences are those of people in mean and depressing surroundings, whose outlook upon the world is clouded with factory smoke and saddened by the hopelessness of any escape. It is not a cheerful book, but it is true to life in the large. *Clayhanger* (1910) is another study of life in the pottery region which Bennett knows so well, not as powerful as *The Old Wives' Tale*, but abounding in bits of strong realism and good portraiture. The second volume in the proposed trilogy, of which *Clayhanger* is the first, is *Hilda Lessways* (1910), a weaker book. Besides these and other novels, Bennett has written dramas, sketches, and essays on a variety of subjects—on too great a variety, indeed, for his better genius. He is a many-sided man, but it may be safely asserted that his claim to permanent fame will rest upon his success in dealing with the romance of commonplace scenes and people like those in *The Old Wives' Tale*.

Herbert George Wells (1866——).—H. G. Wells has long been known to American readers as one of the most brilliant

English essayists and novelists of this generation. He was born in Kent, early became interested in the study of science, and so gave up his original intention of becoming a business man; performed experiments in Huxley's laboratory; and graduated at the University of London. Out of Wells's interest in the romance of science grew his story-writing. Among his first efforts are such brilliant and fantastic things as *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897), and *The War of the Worlds* (1898), the products of a daring scientific imagination. Later on his stories became more sociological. *Kipps* and *Marriage* are novels with strong character interest, in which the author discusses social problems. These two works show a rare genius for satire and an unusual knowledge of biology. *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* (1916) was inspired by the World War, and is one of his strongest books. It deals with the spiritual awakening of a cultured and self-centered Englishman whose favorite son dies at the front; through suffering, Mr. Britling finds God. Another war novel is *The Soul of a Bishop* (1917). Wells's fertility of invention is remarkable, but with all the brilliancy of his creative genius he is in danger of lowering the quality of his art through overproduction.

Other Novelists and Essayists.—Other novelists who have attained international recognition in the later Victorian era or in the present century are: Sir A. Conan Doyle (1859——), author of *A Study in Scarlet, The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes,* and other detective stories; Hall Caine (1853——), author of *The Deemster, The Manxman,* and other novels with scenes in the Isle of Man; Anthony Hope Hawkins (1863——), author of *The Prisoner of Zenda* and *Rupert of Hentzau*; May Sinclair, author of *The Divine Fire*; Maurice Hewlett (1861——), author of *The Life and Death of Richard Yea and Nay, The Queen's Quair,* and *The Forest Lovers*; Eden Phillpotts (1862——), author of *Children of the Mist* and other stories which made Devonshire scenes and folk as famous as Hardy's novels have made "Wessex" and Bennett's stories the North Staffordshire region; William J. Locke (1863——), author of *The*

Beloved Vagabond, the most charming Bohemian story in recent literature; and ISRAEL ZANGWILL (1864——), author of *The Children of the Ghetto* and other stories of lowly Jewish life in London.

Among twentieth-century English essayists, besides H. G. Wells and Arnold Bennett, two deserve special mention for their widespread popularity as companionable and brilliant interpreters of literature and life. ARTHUR CHRISTOPHER BENSON (1862——), son of the late Archbishop of Canterbury and Professor of English Literature in the University of Cambridge, has written a number of delightful essays which reveal a rarely cultured spirit nourished on the humanities. His best known volumes are *The Upton Letters*, *From a College Window* (his own college is Magdalen, a charming retreat beside the quiet Cam), *The Altar Fire*, *Beside Still Waters*, *Thy Rod and thy Staff*. GILBERT K. CHESTERTON (1874——) is the most versatile and startlingly paradoxical essayist of the century so far. Besides many essays in literary criticism, the most striking of which are those on Bernard Shaw, he has written on such suggestive subjects as *Varied Types*, *Heretics*, and *Orthodoxy*. Chesterton is refreshing and stimulating, but so full of unexpected turns of phrase that in the end one is likely to be more amazed at his exceeding cleverness than permanently profited by his thought. At any rate, the attack of this master of paradox is immensely interesting while it is in progress. The point of view and the method of approach are sure to be new.

THE DRAMATISTS

The newer group of English dramatists includes several playwrights who began their work in the late Victorian period,—Jones, Pinero, and Shaw; and the "Irish School," among whom the best known are Yeats, Synge, and Lady Gregory. Modern drama shows clearer technique, more naturalness in speech and action, and a preference for current social themes. As in the novel, so in the drama we find both realism and romance; the comedy of manners reflecting real life flourishes along with romantic comedy

and tragedy based on legend. Most modern actable plays are in prose; Stephen Phillips[1] (1868–1915) wrote several poetic dramas of high merit on ancient and mediaeval subjects, but they are too delicate for lasting popularity on the stage. The foreign dramatist who had most influence on the form and content of the modern English drama was Ibsen, the Norwegian, who died in 1906.

Henry Arthur Jones (1851——).—Henry Arthur Jones, dramatic critic and playwright, is a native of Buckinghamshire. He has written *The Renascence of the English Drama* (1896) and *Foundations of a National Drama* (1913), many essays on dramatic subjects, and has lectured in America. His plays number thirty-five or more, among which *The Case of Rebellious Susan* (1894), *Michael and his Lost Angel* (1896), *The Manoeuvres of Jane* (1898), and *Mrs. Dane's Defense* (1900), may be mentioned as specially noteworthy. The weaknesses of contemporary society form the general subject matter of Jones's plays. The ethical quality is often strong. While it would not be proper to call all his plays literature, some of them are so vital and so refreshing that they have become classics.

Arthur Wing Pinero (1855——).—Sir Arthur Wing Pinero was born in London, educated in private schools, and knighted in 1909. He began life as an actor, but after seven or eight years of valuable stage experience devoted himself solely to the writing of plays. He has written about forty, among which the following may be mentioned for their excellent literary quality and dramatic merit: *Sweet Lavender* (1888), *Lady Bountiful* (1891), *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893), *The Princess and the Butterfly* (1897), *Trelawney of the Wells* (1898). Pinero's plays, like those of Jones, have to do with contemporary society, its foibles and its virtues, presented in a fresh and striking way with a mingling of gentle satire and humor, and sometimes, as in *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, not without a vein of tense tragedy. All the plays were written with the stage in view, and most of them have proved

[1] See page 410.

successful on the boards. For sheer dramatic power, in spite of its disagreeable theme, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* is his greatest play; while *The Princess and the Butterfly* is the most charming in poetic suggestion.

George Bernard Shaw (1856——).—Bernard Shaw, the most original and, as some would have it, the most provoking of present-day dramatists, is a novelist, critic, socialist, and playwright. He was born in Dublin, unconventionally educated, and has spent most of his life in London. His first volume of plays he called *Plays Pleasant and Unpleasant* (1898); three of these are *Arms and the Man, Candida, You Never Can Tell.* A later volume (1900) is called *Plays for Puritans*; two of these are *Caesar and Cleopatra, Man and Superman.* His more recent dramas are *Androcles and the Lion* and *Pygmalion* (1914). All of them are notable for clear technique, originality of thought, and sprightly dialogue. There is generally a pervasive tone of subtle mockery, betokening the cynical attitude of a man at war with romantic emotion. Shaw is outspoken in his dislike of sentimentalism; he is essentially a satirist and in his way a reformer.

Other Dramatists.—Contemporary with the foregoing dramatists is Oscar Wilde (1856–1900), poet and playwright, chief exponent of the "aesthetic movement," whose "Ballad of Reading Gaol" and whose plays *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *The Importance of Being Earnest* are now included in standard collections.—More recent still is the work of Sir James Matthew Barrie (1860——), Scotch novelist and dramatist, whose plays *The Little Minister*, dramatized from the novel, *The Admirable Crichton, Peter Pan,* and *What Every Woman Knows*, are among the most delightful and wholesome of modern comedies.—The novelist, John Galsworthy, already discussed, has written several volumes of plays on social reform, *The Silver Box, Strife, Justice, The Mob*—admirably constructed, but coldly depressing.

THE CELTIC (IRISH) GROUP

William Butler Yeats (1865——).—Yeats, the best known of the new "Irish School," native and resident of Dublin, is

descended from a family of artistic instincts and was himself educated for art. He has written a number of narrative and lyric poems interpreting the old Celtic folk-lore, such as *The Wanderings of Oisin, The Death of Cuchulain, Baile and Aillinn,* and *The Hosting of the Sidhe* (fairies). He has won distinction also as a critic. The achievement for which Yeats will, however, most likely be held in highest esteem is the organization of the Irish National Theatre in which his efforts to popularize Irish legends took definite form. He and other patriotic dramatists wrote plays in prose and verse to be acted and read. These plays deal with Irish life in its legendary, popular, and mystical aspects. "The first of these interests . . . centers on Old Irish cycle and story; . . . the second of them, on the real and contemporary but primitive nature of the people; . . . the third, the mystical impulse, . . . has attempted to reclothe some of the legendary tales and poems with its own spirit."[1] Representative plays are *The Land of Heart's Desire* (1894), *The Countess Cathleen* (1899, revised in 1912 along with *The Land of Heart's Desire*), *The Shadowy Waters* (1900), *Cathleen ni Hoolihan* (1902), *The Hour-Glass* (1903), *On Baile's Strand* (1904), *The Pot of Broth* (1902), *Deirdre* (1907).

The Land of Heart's Desire has enjoyed a widespread popularity, both on account of its theme and the magic of its phrasing. The theme is the triumph of the appeal of primitive faith with its charm of fairyland enchantment over the newer mandate of religious duty in a commonplace world. The "newly-married bride" hearkens to the call of release:

> Come, faeries, take me out of this dull house!
> Let me have all the freedom I have lost;
> Work when I will and idle when I will!
> Faeries, come take me out of this dull world,
> For I would ride with you upon the wind,
> Run on the top of the dishevelled tide,
> And dance upon the mountains like a flame.

[1]Oliver Elton: *Modern Studies,* p. 293.

The Countess Cathleen, in the play by that name, is a lady bountiful who saves her people in a time of famine. In another play, *Cathleen ni Hoolihan*, the heroine stands for Ireland and saves her countrymen by arousing them against foreign oppression. *The Hour-Glass* is a morality play, in which the foolishness of knowledge is contrasted with the saving wisdom of a fool. *Deirdre*, the most tragic drama of Yeats, portrays the fate of the beautiful queen. After seven years of happiness with her young husband, she kills herself when she is being wooed by old King Conchubar, who has treacherously murdered Naisa. The unhappy woman, conscious of impending doom, recalls to Naisa past joys:

> Do you remember that first night in the woods
> We lay all night on leaves, and looking up,
> When the first grey of the dawn awoke the birds,
> Saw leaves above us? You thought that I still slept,
> And bending down to kiss me on the eyes,
> Found they were open. Bend and kiss me now,
> For it may be the last before our death.
> And when that's over, we'll be different;
> Imperishable things, a cloud or a fire.
> And I know nothing but this body, nothing
> But that old vehement, bewildering kiss.

Yeats plays are, more properly speaking, dramatic poems, for they lack action, but no more exquisite verse has been written in this new century.

John Millington Synge (1871–1909).—In pure dramatic genius, John M. Synge stands preëminent in the Celtic group. He was born near Dublin and educated at Trinity College, Dublin. Later he traveled on foot and studied in France, Bavaria, and Italy; then returned to Ireland, lived in the Aran Islands, and did newspaper work. Through the influence of Yeats, he soon became interested in the Irish National Theatre and turned playwright. His principal plays are *Riders to the Sea* (1904), *The Well of the Saints* (1905), *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907), *The Tinker's Wedding* (1909), *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (1910). Death found him at work, having wrought greatly and still full of

promise. The plays of Synge are in prose, but the diction has a poetic cadence and rhythm; the language has the simplicity and raciness of the Irish vernacular; it reflects what Matthew Arnold used to call the "natural magic" of the Celtic temperament. There is more action and more humor than in Yeats; at times, as for instance, in *The Playboy of the Western World*, there is a riotous, farcical movement which reveals the childlike joyousness of the Irish peasant, the utter irresponsibility and unpracticality of a charmingly volatile folk.

Synge uses the old legends, but is equally successful with contemporary life; he makes folk-lore intensely realistic. In dealing with the peasant he invests the action with an atmosphere of mild irony which is altogether irresistible; in rehabilitating ancient sagas, he produces an illusion of reality which evokes the sympathy of inward laughter or the pity of repressed tears. He is often fantastic, boisterous, extravagant, tender, as the occasion and the theme may demand. *The Riders to the Sea* is the tragedy of a mother whose husband and six sons have been swallowed up by the tide; it has the unity of a Greek play and the elemental simplicity of a Russian short story. *Deirdre of the Sorrows* exhibits the primal joyousness of life deepening at last into the twilight and night of utter loneliness. The plays are prose-poems of throbbing life and primal things.

Lady Augusta Gregory (1852——).—Lady Gregory, a native of Galway County, Ireland, first showed her interest in Celtic literature by publishing several books on old Gaelic folk-lore, in which she collected scattered Irish legends and made them accessible, very much as Sir Thomas Malory did with the Arthurian romances in the fifteenth century. Later on, becoming interested in the Irish National Theatre and encouraged by W. B. Yeats, she wrote a number of short plays such as *The Gaol Gate* (1906), *The Rising of the Moon* (1907), *McDonough's Wife* (1913), *Spreading the News* (1904), *Hyacinth Halvey* (1906), and *The Bogie Man* (1913). Several of these are little one-act comedies, or farces, in which the characters are village folk and peasants. They are presented with delightful humor. Lady Gregory

"writes easily, has the theatrical sense, and does not let the old sagas, or any literary sentiment, get between her and the people."[1] She is at her best in merry comedy. Her "skill lies in her light naturalness."

THE POETS

Linking the later Victorians with the present day are several well-known poets besides Kipling (already discussed, see page 436). Robert Bridges (1844——), who succeeded Alfred Austin in 1913 as poet laureate, is the author of readable descriptive poems on rural life and domestic scenes, as well as some good verse on classic subjects.—William E. Henley (1849–1903), a Scotch poet and friend of Stevenson, who spent most of his life in London as editor and critic, has written many heartening poems, one of the best known beginning—

> Out of the night that covers me,
> Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
> I thank whatever gods may be
> For my unconquerable soul.

Austin Dobson (1840——) is the author of some of the most graceful light verse in English literature, reminiscent of the eighteenth century; no one has surpassed him in deftness of touch when it comes to society verse or certain French forms, as found in his *Old World Idylls*, *Vignettes in Rhyme*, and *At the Sign of the Lyre*.—Francis Thompson (1860–1907) wrote many rarely beautiful poems out of his own suffering; *The Hound of Heaven* and *Ode to the Setting Sun*, in which he shows high lyric genius, are among the most famous.—William Watson (1858——), a diligent student of Milton and Wordsworth, has written much verse of fine artistic and ethical quality; several poems are addressed to America: "England to America," "To the Invincible Republic."

Of twentieth-century poets the two outstanding names so far are John Masefield and Alfred Noyes.

[1] Elton: *Modern Studies*, p. 313.

John Masefield (1875———).—Masefield has had a varied life; he knows the dregs of society as well as the finer flavor; he has associated with barroom loafers, with city and country down-and-outs, with sailors, with well-to-do people, with soldiers and nurses in Flanders. Out of this very real world his poems had their origin. In *Salt-Water Ballads*, one of his earliest volumes of verse, he declares:

> Not the ruler for me, but the ranker, the tramp of the road,
> The slave with the sack on his shoulders pricked on with the goad,
> The man with too weighty a burden, too weary a load.
>
> Others may sing of the wine and the wealth and the mirth,
> The portly presence of potentates goodly in girth;—
> Mine be the dirt and the dross, the dust and scum of the earth!

Struggle, suffering, defeat,—these interest him, and he makes them interesting to the reader; and yet what he most cares for is not simply struggle, suffering, defeat as such, but for the intensity of living which they involve. Masefield loves the sensation of life and transfers it to his readers; he has sentiment, too; and because his poetry is saturated with life and sentiment he is popular. He is a realist, of course, but he is first of all an impressionist; he lets you see the thing or the person through his eyes. His material may be sordid, his poetry may read like prose, but somehow he wins your sympathy and stirs your imagination. He loves ships because they contend with the waves and he loves men most, as one critic has noted, when they are driven by storms of passion or adversity and either wrecked or barely rescued. In the living present Masefield finds more romance than in the past; his is the poetry of the common man. Some of his best work is found in *The Daffodil Fields, The Everlasting Mercy, The Widow in the Bye Street, The Story of a Round-House*, and *A Mainsail Haul.* His prose *Tragedy of Nan* is one of the most powerful dramas in modern literature.

Alfred Noyes (1880———).—Very different from Masefield is Alfred Noyes, though he rivals his contemporary in popularity. Noyes is a native of Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, and an

Oxford graduate; he has been for some years Visiting Professor of English Literature in Princeton University, and has read his poems and lectured in various parts of the United States. As a poet Noyes is chiefly interested in the romance of England's glorious past, which is the background of his most ambitious verse. His longest poem is *Drake: An English Epic,* in which he celebrates the defeat of the Spanish Armada and the heroism of the great Elizabethan sea-captain. In the *Tales of the Mermaid Tavern* we have a number of breezy lyrics from the frequenters of that enchanted place, Shakespeare, Marlowe, Jonson, and Raleigh, jolly good fellows, whom we are glad to meet again, even though they are a trifle over-sentimentalized. No other recent poet, indeed, has shown such fine enthusiasm for that full-blooded age or for England's splendid triumphs on the sea. *Forty Singing Seamen* is one of the most spirited lyric poems in English literature. In addition to its rhythmic beauty, at times too reminiscent of Tennyson, the poetry of Noyes has a distinct ethical quality and a nobility of sentiment which show his kinship to the Victorians. The moralist is strong in this romantic poet. He assumes that we have departed from the ancient standards of duty and faith, and that we need to be rallied out of our easy-going materialism. This is the burden of that ringing appeal, "The Trumpet-Call," in the volume entitled *The Lord of Misrule,* beginning—

> Trumpeter, sound for the ancient heights!
> Clouds of the earth-born battle cloak
> The heaven that our fathers held from of old.

It is the voice of an idealist heartening the present through the memory of an heroic past.

Rupert Brooke (1887–1915).—This young poet was born at Rugby and educated at King's College, Cambridge. Early in the World War he volunteered for service in the British Navy and went with the Antwerp expedition; in February, 1915, he sailed with the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force as a sub-lieutenant in the Royal Naval Reserve. On his way to the Dardanelles he

died from blood poisoning, and was buried on the Greek island of Skyros in the Aegean Sea. The fate of Rupert Brooke, who perished in the vigor of his early manhood for the noble cause of liberty, links his name and fame with Sir Philip Sidney and Lord Byron. One poem in particular, among many rarely beautiful lyrics, has touched the heart of the English-speaking world because of its exquisite harmony of phrase and sentiment and its personal application to the dead poet. It is the sonnet entitled "The Soldier":

If I should die, think only this of me:
That there's some corner of a foreign field
That is forever England. There shall be
In that rich earth a richer dust concealed;
A dust whom England bore, shaped, made aware,
Gave once her flowers to love, her ways to roam,
A body of England's, breathing English air,
Washed by the rivers, blest by suns of home.

And think this heart, all evil shed away,
A pulse in the eternal mind, no less
Gives somewhere back the thoughts by England given;
Her sights and sounds; dreams happy as her day;
And laughter, learnt of friends; and gentleness,
In hearts at peace, under an English heaven.

SOME USEFUL BOOKS

Cooper's Some English Story-Tellers (Holt), Phelps's Essays on Modern Novelists (Macmillan), Jones's The Foundation of a National Drama, Hamilton's The Theory of the Theatre (Baker-Taylor Co.), Hunt's The Play of To-day, Hale's Dramatists of To-day, Henderson's George Bernard Shaw, Boyd's The Irish Literary Renaissance, Elton's Modern Studies (Living Irish Literature), Weygandt's Irish Plays and Playwrights, Howe's J. M. Synge: A Critical Study, Krans's William Butler Yeats and the Irish Literary Revival, Borsa's The English Stage of To-day, Dickinson's Chief Contemporary Dramatists (selected plays) (Houghton), "Writers of the Day" (Holt): brief biographies and appreciations of Bennett, Conrad, Galsworthy, Kipling, and Wells; Clarke's A Treasury of War Poetry (Houghton).

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Titles of books, poems, plays, essays, etc., are in italics.
The pronunciation of every name likely to give trouble is indicated as simply as possible.

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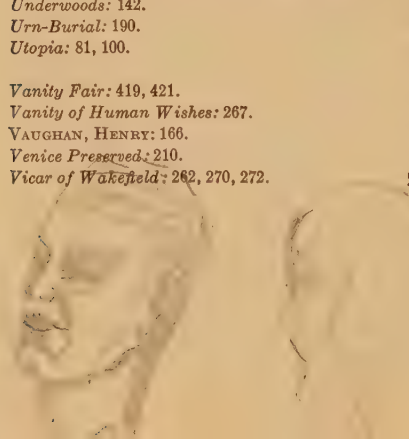

2. False Epic

I Poetry B. Lyric 1. Ode

C. Narrative

D. Didactic

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Literature

II Prose

Classical Age

Dryden Pope Swift

Addison Steele Defoe

Shakespearean Drama

act I — Introduces characters and plot.

act II — Development of the plot

act III — Builds in the Climax

act IV — Conclusion of play.

act V — Consequences